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*Wm. Brudenell
to H.P.C.*

SKETCHES BY BOZ:

Dickens, &c

ILLUSTRATIVE OF EVERY-DAY LIFE AND
EVERY-DAY PEOPLE.

BEING A

CONTINUATION OF

"WATKINS TOTTLE, AND OTHER SKETCHES."

PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY, LEA & BLANCHARD.

1837.

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THE STREETS BY MORNING.

THE appearance presented by the streets of London an hour before sunrise, on a summer's morning, is most striking even to the few whose unfortunate pursuits of pleasure, or scarcely less unfortunate pursuits of business, make them well acquainted with the scene. There is an air of cold, solitary desolation about the noiseless streets which we are accustomed to see thronged at other times by a busy, eager crowd, and the quiet, closely shut buildings, which, throughout the day, are swarming with life and bustle, that is very impressive.

The last drunken man, who shall find his way home before sunlight, has just staggered heavily along, occasionally roaring out the burden of the drinking song of the previous night: the last houseless vagrant, whom penury and the police have left in the streets, has coiled up his chilly limbs in some paved corner, to dream of food and warmth. The drunken, the dissipated, and the wretched, have disappeared: the more sober and orderly part of the population have not yet awakened to the labours of the day; and the stillness of death is over the streets; its very hue seems to be imparted to them, cold and lifeless as they look, in the gray, sombre light of day-break. The coach-stands in the larger thoroughfares are deserted;—the night-houses are closed;—the chosen promenades of profligate misery are empty.

An occasional policeman may be seen at the street-

corners, listlessly gazing on the deserted prospect before him; and now and then a rakish-looking cat runs stealthily across the road, and descends his own area with as much caution and slyness, bounding first on the water-butt, then on the dust-hole, and then alighting on the flag-stones, as if he were conscious that his character depended on his gallantry of the preceding night escaping public observation. A partially opened bedroom window here, and there, bespeaks the heat of the weather, and the uneasy slumbers of its occupant—and the dim, scanty flicker of the rush-light, through the window-blind, denotes the chamber of watching or sickness. With these few exceptions the streets present no signs of life, nor the houses of habitation.

An hour wears away. The spires of the churches, and roofs of the principal buildings, are faintly tinged with the light of the rising sun; and the streets, by almost imperceptible degrees, begin to resume their bustle and animation. Market-carts roll slowly along; the sleepy wagoner impatiently urging on his tired horses, or vainly endeavouring to awaken the boy, who, luxuriously stretched on the top of the fruit-baskets, forgets in happy oblivion his long-cherished curiosity to behold the wonders of London.

Rough, sleepy-looking animals, of strange appearance, something between ostlers and hackney-coachmen, begin to take down the shutters of early public-houses; and little deal tables, with the ordinary preparations for a street-breakfast, make their appearance at the customary stations. Numbers of men and women, (principally the latter,) carrying upon their heads heavy baskets of fruit, toil down the park side of Piccadilly, on their way to Covent-garden; and, following each other in rapid succession, form a long straggling line from thence to the turn of the road at Knightsbridge.

Here and there a bricklayer's labourer, with the day's

dinner tied up in a handkerchief, walks briskly to his work, and occasionally a little knot of three or four schoolboys on a stolen bathing expedition, rattle merrily over the pavement, their boisterous mirth contrasting forcibly with the demeanour of the little sweep, who, having knocked and rung till his arm aches, and, being interdicted by a merciful legislature from endangering his lungs by calling out, sits patiently down on the door-step until the housemaid may happen to awake.

Covent-garden market, and the avenues leading to it, are thronged with carts of all sorts, sizes, and descriptions,—from the heavy lumbering wagon, with its four stout horses, to the jingling coster-monger's cart with its consumptive donkey. The pavement is already strewed with decayed cabbage-leaves, broken hay-bands, and all the indescribable litter of a vegetable market, and the numerous noises are almost as multifarious—men shouting, carts backing, horses neighing, boys fighting, basket-women talking, piemen expatiating on the excellence of their pastry, donkeys braying, and a hundred other sounds, form a compound discordant enough, even to a Londoner's ears, and remarkably disagreeable to those of country gentlemen, who are sleeping at the Hummums for the first time.

Another hour passes away, and the day begins in good earnest. The servant of all work, who, under the plea of sleeping very soundly, has utterly disregarded "Missis's" ringing for half an hour previously, is warned by master, (whom Missis has sent up in his drapery to the landing-place for that purpose) that it's half-past six, whereupon she awakes all of a sudden, with well-feigned astonishment, and goes down stairs very sulkily, wishing, while she strikes a light, that the principle of spontaneous combustion would extend itself to coals and kitchen ranges. When the fire is lit she opens

the street-door to take in the milk, when, by the most singular coincidence in the world, she discovers that the servant next door has just taken in her milk too, and that Mr. Todd's young man over the way is, by an equally extraordinary chance, taking down his master's shutters. The inevitable consequence is, that she just steps, milk-jug in hand, as far as next door, just to say "good morning" to Betsy Clark, and that Mr. Todd's young man steps over the way just to say "good morning" to both of 'em; and as the aforesaid Mr. Todd's young man is almost as good-looking and fascinating as the baker himself, the conversation quickly becomes very interesting, and probably would become more so, if Betsy Clark's missis, who always will be a followin' her about, didn't give an angry tap at her bed-room window, on which Mr. Todd's young man tries to whistle coolly, as he goes back to his shop much faster than he came from it; and the two girls run back to their respective places, and shut their street-doors with surprising softness, each of them poking their heads out of the front parlour-window a minute afterwards, however, ostensibly with the view of looking at the mail which just then passes by, but really for the purpose of catching another glimpse of Mr. Todd's young man, who, being fond of mails, but more fond of females, takes a short look at the coach and a long look at the girls, much to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

The mail itself goes on to the coach-office in due course, and the passengers who are going out by the early coach stare with astonishment at the passengers who are coming in by the early coach, who look blue and dismal, and are evidently under the influence of that odd feeling produced by travelling, which makes the events of yesterday morning seem as if they had happened at least six months ago, and induces people

to wonder, with considerable gravity, whether the friends and relations they took leave of, a fortnight before, have altered much since they left them. The coach-office is all alive, and the coaches which are just going out are surrounded by the usual crowd of Jews and nondescripts, who seem to consider, Heaven knows why that it's quite impossible any man can mount a coach without requiring at least six penn'orth of oranges, a penknife, a pocket-book, a last year's annual, a pencil-case, a piece of sponge, and a small series of caricatures.

Half-an-hour more, and the sun darts his bright rays cheerfully down the still half-empty streets, and shines with sufficient force to rouse the diurnal laziness of the apprentice, who pauses every other minute from his task of sweeping out the shop and watering the pavement in front of it, to tell another apprentice similarly employed how hot it will be to-day, or to stand with his right hand shading his eyes, and his left resting on the broom, gazing at the Wonder, or the Tally-Ho, or the Nimrod, or some other fast coach, till it's out of sight, when he re-enters the shop, envying the passengers on the outside of the fast coach, and thinking of the old red brick house "down in the country," where he went to school: the miseries of thin milk and water, and thick bread and scrapings, fading into nothing before the pleasant recollection of the green field the boys used to play in, and the green pond he was caned for presuming to fall into, and other school-boy associations.

Cabs, with trunks and band-boxes between the drivers' legs, and outside the apron, rattle briskly up and down the streets on their way to the coach-offices, or steam-packet wharfs; and the cab-drivers and hackney-coachmen, who are on the stand, polish up the ornamental part of their dingy vehicles—the former won-

dering how people can prefer "them wild beast cariwans of omnibusses, to a riglar cab with a fast trotter," and the latter admiring how people can trust their necks into one of "them crazy cabs, when they can have a 'spectable ackney cotche with a pair of orses as von't run away with no vun;"—a consolation unquestionably founded in fact, seeing that a hackney-coach horse never was known to run at all, "except," as the smart cab-man in front of the rank observes, "except one, and *he* run back'ards!"

The shops are now completely opened, and apprentices and shopmen are busily engaged in cleaning and decking the windows for the day. The bakers' shops in town are filled with servants and children waiting for the drawing of the first batch of rolls—an operation which was performed a full hour ago in the suburbs; for the early-clerk population of Somers and Camden Towns, Islington and Pentonville, are fast pouring into the city, or directing their steps towards Chancery-lane and the Inns of Court. Middle-aged men, whose annual salaries have by no means increased in the same proportion as their families, plod steadily along, apparently with no object in view but the counting-house; knowing by sight almost every body they meet or overtake, for they have seen them every morning (Sundays excepted) during the last twenty years—but speaking to no one. If they do happen to overtake a personal acquaintance, they just exchange a hurried salutation, and keep walking on, either by his side, or in front of him, as his rate of walking may chance to be. As to stopping to shake hands, or to take the friend's arm, they seem to think it is not included in their salary, and they have no right to do it. Small office lads in large hats, who are made men before they are boys, hurry along in pairs with their first coat carefully brushed, and the white trousers of last Sun-

day plentifully besmeared with dust and ink. It evidently requires a considerable mental struggle to avoid investing part of the day's dinner-money in the purchase of the stale tarts so temptingly exposed in dusty tins at the pastry-cook's doors; but a consciousness of their own importance, and the receipt of seven shillings a week, with the prospect of an early rise to eight, comes to their aid, and they accordingly put their hats a little more on one side, and look under the bonnets of all the milliners' and stay-makers' apprentices they meet. Poor girls! The hardest worked, the worst paid, and, too often, the worst used class of the community.

Eleven o'clock, and a new set of people fill the streets. The goods in the shop-windows are invitingly arranged; the shopmen in their white neckerchiefs, and spruce coats, look as if they couldn't clean a window if their lives depended on it; the carts have disappeared from Covent Garden; the wagoners have returned, and the costermongers repaired to their ordinary "beats" in the suburbs; clerks are at their offices; and gigs, cabs, omnibuses, and saddle-horses, are conveying their masters to the same destination. The streets are thronged with a vast concourse of people—gay and shabby, rich and poor, idle and industrious; and we come to the heat, bustle, and activity, of Noon.

THE STREETS BY NIGHT.

BUT the Streets of London, to be beheld in the very height of their glory, should be seen on a dark, dull, murky, winter's night, when there is just enough damp gently stealing down to make the pavement greasy, without cleansing it of any of its impurities, and when the heavy lazy mist which, hangs over every object, makes the gas lamps look brighter, and the brilliantly-lighted shops more splendid, from the contrast they present to the darkness around. Every body at home on such a night as this, *seem* disposed to make *themselves* as snug and comfortable as possible; and the passengers in the streets have excellent reason to envy the fortunate individuals who are seated by their own fire-sides.

In the larger and better kind of streets, dining parlour curtains are closely drawn, kitchen fires blaze brightly up, and savoury steams of hot dinners salute the nostrils of the hungry wayfarer, as he plods wearily by the area railings. In the suburbs, the muffin-boy rings his way down the little street, much more slowly than he is wont to do; for Mrs. Macklin, at No. 4, has no sooner opened her little street door and screamed out "Muffins" with all her might, than Mrs. Walker, at No. 5, puts her head out of the parlour-window and screams "Muffins" too, and Mrs. Walker has scarcely got the word out of her lips, than Mrs. Peplow, over the way, lets loose Master Peplow, who darts down the

street with a velocity which nothing but *buttered* muffins in perspective could possibly inspire, and drags the boy back by main force, whereupon Mrs. Macklin and Mrs. Walker, just to save the boy trouble, and to say a few neighbourly words to Mrs. Peplow at the same time, run over the way and buy their muffins at Mrs. Peplow's door, when it appears from the voluntary statement of Mrs. Walker, that her kittle's just a biling, and the cups and sarsers ready laid, and that, as it was such a wretched night out o' doors, she'd made up her mind to have a nice hot comfortable cup o' tea—a determination at which, by the most singular coincidence, the other two ladies had simultaneously arrived.

After a little conversation about the wretchedness of the weather and the merits of tea, with a digression relative to the viciousness of boys as a rule, and the amiability of Master Peplow as an exception, Mrs. Walker sees her husband coming down the street; and as he must want his tea, poor man, after his dirty walk from the Docks, she instantly runs across, muffins in hand, and Mrs. Macklin does the same, and after a few words to Mrs. Walker, they all pop into their little houses and slam their little street doors, which are not opened again for the remainder of the evening, except to the nine o'clock "beer," who comes round with a lantern in front of his tray, and says, as he lends Mrs. Walker "Yesterday's Tiser," "that he's blessed if he can hardly hold the p, much less feel the paper, for it's one of the-bitterest nights ever he felt, 'cept the night when the man was froze to death in the Brick-field."

After a little prophetic conversation with the policeman at the street-corner, touching a probable change in the weather, and the setting-in of a hard frost, the nine o'clock beer returns to his master's house, and employs himself for the remainder of the evening in as-

siduously stirring the tap-room fire, and deferentially taking part in the conversation of the worthies assembled round it.

The streets in the vicinity of the Marsh-gate and Victoria Theatre present an appearance of dirt and discomfort on such a night, which the groups, who lounge about them, in no degree tend to diminish. Even the little block-tin temple, sacred to baked potatoes, surmounted by a splendid design in variegated lamps, looks less gay than usual; and as to the kidney-pie stand, its glory has quite departed. The candle in the transparent lamp, manufactured of oil paper, embellished with "Characters," has been blown out fifty times, so the kidney-pie merchant, tired with running backwards and forwards to the next wine vaults to get a light, has given up the idea of illumination in despair, and the only signs of his whereabouts are the bright sparks, of which a long irregular train is whirled down the street every time he opens his portable oven to hand a hot kidney-pie to a customer.

Flat-fish, oyster, and fruit-venders, linger hopelessly in the kennel, in vain endeavouring to attract customers; and the ragged boys who usually disport themselves about the streets, stand crouched in little knots in some projecting doorway, or under the canvass window blind of the cheesemonger's, where great flaring gas lights, unshaded by any glass, display huge piles of bright red, and pale yellow cheeses, mingled with little five-penny dabs of dingy bacon, various tubs of weekly Dorset, and cloudy rolls of "best fresh."

Here they amuse themselves with theatrical converse, arising out of their last half-price visit to the Victoria gallery, admire the terrific combat, which is nightly encored, and expatiate on the inimitable manner in which Bill Thompson can come the double monkey,

or go through the mysterious involutions of the sailor's hornpipe.

It is nearly eleven o'clock, and the cold thin rain, which has been drizzling so long, is beginning to pour down in good earnest; the baked-tatur man has departed—the kidney-pieman has just departed with his warehouse on his arm with the same object—the cheese-monger has drawn in his blind—and the boys have dispersed. The constant clicking of pattens on the slippy and uneven pavement, and the rustling of umbrellas, as the wind blows against the shop-windows, bear testimony to the inclemency of the night; and the policeman, with his oil-skin cape buttoned closely round him, seems as he holds his hat on his head, and turns round to avoid the gust of wind and rain which drives against him at the street corner, to be very far from congratulating himself on the prospect before him.

The little chandler's shop with the cracked bell behind the door, whose melancholy tinkling has been regulated by the demand for quarterns of sugar and half-ounces of coffee, is shutting up. The crowds which have been passing to and fro during the whole day, are rapidly dwindling away; and the noise of shouting and quarrelling, which issues from the public houses, is almost the only sound that breaks the melancholy stillness of the night.

There was another, but it has ceased. That wretched woman, with the infant in her arms, round whose meagre form the remnant of her own scanty shawl is carefully wrapped, has been attempting to sing some popular ballad, in the hope of wringing a few pence from the compassionate passer-by. A brutal laugh at her weak voice, is all she has gained. The tears fall thick and fast down her worn pale face; the child is cold and hungry, and its low half-stifled wailing adds to the misery of its wretched mother, as she moans

aloud, and sinks despairingly down, on a cold damp door step.

Singing! How few of those who pass such a miserable creature as this, think of the anguish of heart, the sinking of soul and spirit, which the very effort of singing produces. What a bitter mockery! Disease, neglect, and starvation, faintly articulating the words of the joyous ditty that has enlivened your hours of feasting and merriment, God knows how often! It is no subject for jeering. The weak tremulous voice tells a fearful tale of want and famishing; and the feeble singer of this roaring song may turn away, only to die of cold and hunger.

One o'clock! Parties returning from the different theatres, foot it through the muddy streets; cabs, hackney-coaches, carriages, and theatre omnibuses, roll swiftly by: watermen with dim dirty lanterns in their hands, and large brass plates upon their breasts, who have been shouting and rushing about for the last two hours, retire to their watering houses, to solace themselves with the creature comforts of pipes and purl; the half-price pit and box frequenters of the theatre throng to the different houses of refreshment; and chops, kidneys, rabbits, oysters, stout, cigars, and "goes" innumerable, are served up amidst a noise and confusion of smoking, running, knife clattering, and waiter-clattering, perfectly indescribable.

The more musical portion of the play-going community betake themselves to some harmonic meeting; and, as a matter of curiosity, we will follow them thither for a few moments.

In a lofty room, of spacious dimensions, are some eighty or a hundred guests knocking little pewter measures on the tables, and hammering away, with the handles of their knives, as if they were so many trunk makers. They are applauding a glee, which has just

been executed by the three "professional gentlemen" at the top of the centre table, one of whom is in the chair—the little pompous man with the bald head just emerging from the collar of his green coat. The others are seated on either side of him—the stout man with the small voice, and the thin-faced dark man in black. The little man in the chair is a most amusing personage—*such* condescending grandeur, and *such* a voice.

"Bass!" as the young gentleman near us with the blue stock forcibly remarks to his companion, "bass! I b'lieve you, he can go down lower than any man; so low sometimes that you can't hear him." And so he does. To hear him growling away, gradually lower and lower down, till he can't get back again, is the most delightful thing in the world, and it is quite impossible to witness unmoved the impressive solemnity with which he pours forth his soul in "My art's in the Highlands, or "The Brave old Hoak." The stout man is also addicted to sentimentality, and warbles "Fly, fly from the world, my Bessy, with me," or some such song, with lady-like sweetness, and in the most seductive tones imaginable.

"Pray, give your orders gen'l'm'n—pray give your orders," says the pale-faced man with the red head; and demands for "goes" of gin and "goes" of brandy, and pints of stout, and cigars of peculiar mildness, are vociferously made from all parts of the room. The "professional gentlemen" are in the very height of their glory, and bestow condescending nods, or even a word or two of recognition, on the better known frequenters of the room, in the most bland and patronizing manner possible.

That little round-faced man, with the small brown surtout, white stockings and shoes, is in the comic line; the mixed air of self-denial, and mental consciousness of his own powers, with which he acknowledges

the call of the chair, is particularly gratifying. "Gentlemen," says the little pompous man, accompanying the word with a knock of the president's hammer on the table. "Gentlemen, allow me to claim your attention—our friend Mr. Smuggings will oblige,"—"Bravo!" shout the company, and Smuggings, after a considerable quantity of coughing by way of symphony, and a most facetious sniff or two, which afford general delight, sings a comic song with a fal-de-ral—tol-de-rol chorus at the end of every verse, much longer than the verse itself. It is received with unbounded applause; and after some aspiring genius has volunteered a recitation, and failed dismally therein, the little pompous man gives another knock, and says, "Gen'l'm'n, we will attempt a glee, if you please." This announcement calls forth tumultuous applause, and the more energetic spirits express the unqualified approbation it affords them, by knocking one or two stout glasses off their legs—a humorous device; but one which frequently occasions some slight altercation, when the form of paying the damages is proposed to be gone through, by the waiter.

Scenes like these are continued until three or four o'clock in the morning; and even when they close, fresh ones open to the inquisitive novice. But as a description of all of them, however slight, would require a volume, the contents of which, however instructive, would be by no means pleasing, we make our bow, and drop the curtain.

MAKING A NIGHT OF IT.

DAMON and Pythias were undoubtedly very good fellows in their way: the former for his extreme readiness to put in special bail for a friend; and the latter for a certain trump-like punctuality in turning up just in the very nick of time, scarcely less remarkable. Many points in their character have now grown obsolete. Damons are rather hard to find in these days of imprisonment for debt; (except the sham ones, and they cost half-a-crown) and, as to the Pythiases, the few that have existed in these degenerate times, have had an unfortunate knack of making themselves scarce, at the very moment when their appearance would have been strictly classical. If the actions of these heroes, however, can find no parallel in modern times, their friendship can. We have Damon and Pythias on the one hand—Potter and Smithers on the other: and lest the two last-mentioned names should never have reached the ears of our unenlightened readers, we can do no better than make them acquainted with the owners thereof.

Mr. Thomas Potter, then, was a clerk in the city, and Mr. Robert Smithers was a ditto in the same; their incomes were limited, but their friendship was unbounded. They lived in the same street, walked into town every morning at the same hour, dined at the same slap-bang every day, and revelled in each other's company every night. They were knit toge-

ther by the closest ties of intimacy and friendship; or, as Mr. Thomas Potter touchingly observed, they were "thick and thin pals, and nothing but it." There was a spice of romance in Mr. Smithers's disposition—a ray of poetry—a gleam of misery—a sort of consciousness of he didn't exactly know what, coming across him he didn't precisely know why—which stood out in fine relief against the off-hand, dashing, amateur-pick-pocket-sort-of-manner, which distinguished Mr. Potter in an eminent degree.

The peculiarity of their respective dispositions, extended itself to their individual costume. Mr. Smithers generally appeared in public, in a surtout and shoes, with a narrow black neckerchief, and a brown hat, very much turned up at the sides—peculiarities which Mr. Potter wholly eschewed: for it was his ambition to do something in the celebrated "kiddy" or stage-coach way, and he had even gone so far, as to invest capital in the purchase of a rough blue coat with wooden buttons, made upon the fireman's principle, in which, with the addition of a low-crowned, flower-pot-saucer-shaped hat, he had created no inconsiderable sensation at the Albion, and divers other places of public and fashionable resort.

Mr. Potter and Mr. Smithers had mutually agreed, that, on the receipt of their quarter's salary, they would jointly, and in company, "spend the evening"—an evident misnomer—the spending applying, as every body knows, not to the evening itself, but to all the money the individual may chance to be possessed of, on the occasion to which reference is made; and they had farther agreed that, on the evening aforesaid, they would "make a night of it"—an expressive term, implying the borrowing of several hours from to-morrow morning, adding them to the night before, and manufacturing a compound night of the whole.

The quarter-day arrived at last—we say at last, because quarter-days are as eccentric as comets, moving wonderfully quick when you've a good deal to pay, and marvellously slow when you've a little to receive; and Mr. Thomas Potter and Mr. Robert Smithers met by appointment to begin the evening with a dinner; and a nice, snug, comfortable dinner they had, consisting of a little procession of four chops, and four kidneys, following each other, supported on either side by a pot of the real draught stout, and attended by divers cushions of bread, and wedges of cheese.

When the cloth was removed, Mr. Thomas Potter ordered the waiter to bring in two "goes" of his best Scotch whiskey, with warm water and sugar, and a couple of his "very mildest" Havannahs, which the waiter did. Mr. Thomas Potter mixed his grog, and lit his cigar: Mr. Robert Smithers did the same; and then Mr. Thomas Potter jocularly proposed as the first toast, "the abolition of all offices whatever," (not sinecures, but counting-houses,) which was immediately drunk by Mr. Robert Smithers, with enthusiastic applause; and then they went on talking politics, puffing cigars, and sipping whiskey and water, till the "goes"—most appropriately so called—were both gone, which Mr. Robert Smithers perceiving, immediately ordered in two more goes of the best Scotch whiskey, and two more of the very mildest Havannahs; and the goes kept coming in, and the mild Havannahs kept going out, until what with the drinking, and lighting, and puffing, and the stale ashes on the table, and the tallow-grease on the cigars, Mr. Robert Smithers began to doubt the mildness of the Havannahs, and to feel very much as if he'd been sitting in a hackney-coach, with his back to the horses.

As to Mr. Thomas Potter, he would keep laughing out loud, and volunteering inarticulate declarations

that he was "all right"—in proof of which, he feebly bespoke the evening paper after the next gentleman, but finding it a matter of some difficulty to discover any news in its columns, or to ascertain distinctly whether it had any columns at all, he walked slowly out, to look for the comet—and after coming back quite pale with looking up at the sky so long, and attempting to express mirth at Mr. Robert Smithers having fallen asleep, by various galvanic chuckles, he laid his head on his arm, and went to sleep also. When he woke again, Mr. Robert Smithers woke too, and they both very gravely agreed that it was extremely unwise to eat so many pickled walnuts with the chops, as it was a notorious fact that they always made people queer and sleepy; indeed, if it hadn't been for the whiskey and cigars, there was no knowing what harm they mightn't have done 'em. So they took some coffee, and, after paying the bill, twelve and two-pence the dinner, and the odd two-pence for the waiter, thirteen shillings, started out on their expedition to manufacture a night.

It was just half-past eight, so they thought they couldn't do better than go half-price to the slips at the City Theatre, which they did accordingly. Mr. Robert Smithers, who had become extremely poetical after the settlement of the bill, enlivening the walk by informing Mr. Thomas Potter, in confidence, that he felt an inward presentiment of approaching dissolution: and subsequently embellishing the theatre by falling asleep, with his head and both arms gracefully drooping over the front of the boxes.

Such was the quiet demeanour of the unassuming Smithers, and such were the happy effects of Scotch whiskey and Havannahs on that interesting person; but Mr. Thomas Potter, whose great aim it was to be considered as a "knowing card," a "fast-goer, and so forth, conducted himself in a very different manner,

and commenced going very fast indeed—rather too fast at last for the patience of the audience to keep pace with. On his first entry, he contented himself by earnestly calling upon the gentlemen in the gallery to “flare up,” accompanying the demand with another request, expressive of his wish that they would instantaneously “form a union,” both which requisitions were responded to in the manner most in vogue on such occasions. “Give that dog a bone,” cried one gentleman in his shirt sleeves. “Vere have you been having half a pint of intermediate?” cries a second. “Tailor!” screamed a third. “Barber’s clerk!” shouted a fourth. “Throw him o—ver!” roared a fifth, while numerous voices concurred in desiring Mr. Thomas Potter to return to the arms of his maternal parent, or, in common parlance, to “go home to his mother!” All these taunts Mr. Thomas Potter received with supreme contempt, cocking the low-crowned hat a little more on one side, whenever any reference was made to his personal appearance; and, standing up with his arms a-kimbo, expressing defiance most melo-dramatically.

The overture—to which these various sounds had been an *ad libitum* accompaniment—concluded;—the second piece began, and Mr. Thomas Potter, emboldened by impunity, proceeded to behave in a most unprecedented and outrageous manner. First of all, he imitated the shake of the principal female singer; then groaned at the blue fire; then affected to be frightened into convulsions of terror at the appearance of the ghost; and, lastly, not only made a running commentary, in an audible voice, upon the dialogue on the stage, but actually awoke Mr. Robert Smithers—who, hearing his companion making a noise, and having a very indistinct notion of where he was, or what was required of him, immediately, by way of imitating a good example, set up the most unearthly, unremitting,

and appalling howling that ever audience heard. It was too much. "Turn 'em out," was the general cry. A noise as of shuffling of feet, and men being knocked up with violence against wainscoting, was heard: a hurried dialogue of "Come out"—"I won't"—"You shall"—"I shan't"—"Give me your card, sir"—"You're a scoundrel, sir," and so forth, succeeded; a round of applause betokened the approbation of the audience; and Mr. Robert Smithers and Mr. Thomas Potter found themselves shot with astonishing swiftness into the road, without having had the trouble of once putting foot to ground during the whole progress of their rapid descent.

Mr. Robert Smithers being constitutionally one of the slow-goers, and having had quite enough of fast-going, in the course of his recent expulsion, to last 'till the quarter-day then next ensuing, at the very least, had no sooner emerged with his companion from the precincts of Milton street, than he proceeded to indulge in circuitous references to the beauties of sleep, mingled with distant allusions to the propriety of returning to Islington, and testing the influence of their patent Brahmahs over the street-door locks to which they respectively belonged. Mr. Thomas Potter, however, was valorous and peremptory. They had come out to make a night of it; and a night must be made. So Mr. Robert Smithers, who was three parts dull, and the other dismal, despairingly assented: and they went into a wine-vault to get materials for assisting them in making a night, where they found a good many young ladies, and various old gentlemen, and a plentiful sprinkling of hackney-coachmen and cab-drivers, all drinking and talking together; and Mr. Thomas Potter and Mr. Robert Smithers drank small glasses of brandy, and large glasses of soda, till they began to have a very confused idea, either of things in general, or any thing in particular;

and when they had done treating themselves, they began to treat every body else; and the rest of the entertainment was a confused mixture of heads and heels, black eyes and blue uniforms, mud and gas lights, thick doors, and a stone paving. Then, as standard novelists expressively inform us, "all was a blank!" and in the morning the blank was filled up with the words "Station-house," and the station-house was filled up with Mr. Thomas Potter, Mr. Robert Smithers, and the major part of their wine-vault companions of the preceding night, with a comparatively small portion of clothing of any kind. And it was disclosed at the Police-office to the indignation of the Bench, and the astonishment of the spectators, how one Robert Smithers, aided and abetted by one Thomas Potter, had knocked down and beaten, in divers streets, at different times, five men, four boys, and three women: how the said Thomas Potter had feloniously obtained possession of five door-knockers, two bell-handles, and a bonnet; how Robert Smithers, his friend, had sworn at least forty pounds' worth of oaths, at the rate of five shillings a-piece; terrified whole streets-full of His Majesty's subjects, with awful shrieks and alarms of fire; destroyed the uniforms of five policemen; and committed various other atrocities, too numerous to recapitulate. And the magistrate, after an appropriate reprimand, fined Mr. Thomas Potter and Mr. Robert Smithers five shillings each, for being what the law vulgarly terms drunk, with the trifling addition of thirty-four pounds, for seventeen assaults, at five shillings a-head, with liberty to speak to the prosecutors.

The prosecutors *were* spoken to; and Messrs. Potter and Smithers lived on credit for a quarter, as best they might; and, although the prosecutors expressed their readiness to be assaulted twice a-week on the same terms, they have never since been detected in making a night of it.

CRIMINAL COURTS.

WE shall never forget the mingled feelings of awe and respect, with which we used to gaze on the exterior of Newgate in our school-boy days. How dreadful its rough, heavy walls, and low massive doors, appeared to us—the latter looking as if they were made for the express purpose of letting people in, and never letting them out again. Then the fetters over the debtors' door, which we used to think were a *bonâ fide* set of irons, just hung up there, for convenience sake, ready to be taken down at a moment's notice, and rivetted on the limbs of some refractory felon! We used to wonder how the hackney-coachmen on the opposite stand, could cut jokes in the presence of such horrors, and drink pots of half-and-half so near the last drop.

Often have we strayed here in sessions time, just to catch a glimpse of the whipping-place, and that dark building on one side of the yard, in which is kept the gibbet with all its dreadful apparatus, and on the door of which we half expected to see a brass plate, with the inscription "Mr. Ketch;" for we never imagined that the distinguished functionary could by possibility

live any where else. The days of these childish dreams have passed away, and with them many other boyish ideas of a gayer nature. But we still retain so much our original feeling, that to this hour we never pass the building without something like a shudder.

What London pedestrian is there who has not, at some time or other, cast a hurried glance through the wicket at which prisoners are admitted into this gloomy mansion, and surveyed the few objects he could discern, with an indiscrible feeling of curiosity? The thick door, plated with iron and mounted with spikes, just low enough to enable you to see, leaning over them, an ill-looking fellow in a broad-brimmed hat, belcher handkerchief, and top boots, with a brown coat, something between a great coat and a "sporting" jacket, on his back, and an immense key in his left hand. Perhaps you are lucky enough to pass, just as the gate is being opened; then you see on the other side of the lodge, another gate, the very image of its predecessor, and two or three more turnkeys, who look like multiplications of the first one, seated round a fire which just lights up the whitewashed apartment sufficiently to enable you to catch a hasty glimpse of these different objects. We have a great respect for Mrs. Fry, but she certainly ought to have written more romances than Mrs. Radcliffe.

We were walking leisurely down the Old Bailey, a few weeks ago, when, just as we passed this identical gate, it was opened by the officiating turnkey. We turned quickly round, as a matter of course, and saw two persons descending the steps. We could not help stopping and observing them.

They were an elderly woman, of decent appearance, though evidently poor, and a boy of about four-

teen or fifteen. The woman was crying bitterly; she carried a small bundle in her hand, and the boy followed at a short distance behind her. Their little history was obvious. The boy was her son, to whose early comfort she had perhaps sacrificed her own; for whose sake she had borne misery without repining, and poverty without a murmur; looking steadily forward to the time, when he who had so long witnessed her struggles for himself, might be enabled to make some exertions for their joint support. He had formed dissolute connexions; idleness had led to crime, and he had been committed to take his trial for some petty theft. He had been long in prison, and, after receiving some trifling additional punishment, had been ordered to be discharged that morning. It was his first offence, and his poor old mother, still hoping to reclaim him, had been waiting at the gate to implore him to return to his home.

We never shall forget the boy; he descended the steps with a dogged look, shaking his head with an air of bravado and obstinate determination. They walked a few paces, and paused. The woman put her hand upon his shoulder in an agony of entreaty, and the boy sullenly raised his head as if in refusal. It was a brilliant morning, and every object looked fresh and happy in the broad, gay sun-light; he gazed around him for a few moments, bewildered with the brightness of the scene—it was long since he had beheld any thing save the gloomy walls of a prison. The contrast was powerful; perhaps the wretchedness of his mother made some impression on the boy's heart; perhaps some undefined recollections of the time when he was a happy child, and she his only friend, and best companion, crowded on him—he

burst into tears; and covering his face with one hand, and hurriedly placing the other in his mother's, they walked away together.

Curiosity has occasionally led us into both Courts at the Old Bailey. Nothing is so likely to strike the person who enters them for the first time, as the calm indifference with which the proceedings are conducted; every trial seems a mere matter of business. There is a great deal of form, but no compassion; considerable interest, but no sympathy. Take the Old Court for example. There sit the judges, with whose great dignity every body is acquainted, and of whom therefore we need say no more. Then there is the Lord Mayor in the centre, looking as cool as a Lord Mayor *can* look, with an immense *bouquet* before him, and habited in all the splendour of his office. Then there are the Sheriffs, who are almost as dignified as the Lord Mayor himself; and the Barristers, who are quite dignified enough in their own opinion; and the spectators, who having paid for their admission, look upon the whole scene as if it were got up especially for their amusement. Look upon the whole group in the body of the court—some wholly engrossed in the morning papers, others carelessly conversing in low whispers, and others, again, quietly dozing away an hour—and you can scarcely believe that the result of the trial is a matter of life or death to one wretched being present.

Turn your eyes to the dock; watch the prisoner attentively for a few moments, and the fact is before you, in all its painful reality. Mark how restlessly he has been engaged for the last ten minutes, in forming all sorts of fantastic figures with the herbs which are strewed upon the ledge before him; observe the

ashy paleness of his face, when a particular witness appears, and how he changes his position and wipes his clammy forehead, and feverish hands, when the case for the prosecution is closed, as if it were a relief to him to feel that the jury knew the worst.

The defence is concluded; the judge proceeds to sum up the evidence, and the prisoner watches the countenances of the jury, as a dying man, clinging to life to the very last, vainly looks in the face of his physician for one slight ray of hope. They turn round to consult; you can almost hear the man's heart beat, as he bites that stalk of rosemary, with a desperate effort to appear composed. They resume their places; a dead silence prevails as the foreman delivers in the verdict—"Guilty! An appalling shriek bursts from a female in the gallery; the prisoner casts one look at the quarter from whence the noise proceeded, and is immediately hurried from the dock by the gaoler. The clerk directs one of the officers of the court to "take the woman out," and fresh business is proceeded with, as if nothing had occurred.

No imaginary contrast to a case like this, could be as complete as that which is constantly presented in the New Court, the gravity of which is frequently disturbed in no small degree, by the cunning and pertinacity of juvenile offenders. A boy of thirteen is tried, say for picking the pocket of some subject of his Majesty, and the offence is about as clearly proved as an offence can be. He is called upon for his defence, and contents himself with a little declamation about the jurymen and his country—asserts that all the witnesses have committed perjury, and hints that the police force generally, have entered into a conspiracy "again" him. However probable this state-

ment may be, it fails to convince the Court, and some such scene as the following then takes place:—

Court: Have you any witnesses to speak to your character, boy?

Boy: Yes, my Lord; fifteen gen'lm'n is a vaten outside, and vos a vaten all day yesterday, vich they told me the night afore my trial vos a comin' on.

Court: Inquire for these witnesses.

Here a very stout beadle runs out, and vociferates for the witnesses at the very top of his voice; you hear his cry grow fainter and fainter as he descends the steps into the court-yard below. After an absence of five minutes, he returns very warm, and hoarse, and informs the Court of what it was perfectly well aware of, before—namely, that there are no such witnesses in attendance. Hereupon the boy sets up the most awful howling ever heard within or without the walls of a court; screws the lower part of the palms of his hands into the corners of his eyes, and endeavours to look the very picture of injured innocence. The jury at once find him “guilty,” and his endeavours to squeeze out a tear or two, are redoubled. The governor of the gaol then states, in reply to an inquiry from the bench, that the prisoner has been under his care twice before. This the urchin resolutely denies in some such terms as—“S’elp me God, gen’lm’n, I never vos in trouble afore—indeed, my Lord, I never vos. It’s all a howen to my having a twin brother, vich has wrongfully taken to priggging, and vich is so exactly like me, that no vun ever knows the difference atween us.”

This representation, like the defence, fails in producing the desired effect, and the boy is sentenced, perhaps, to seven years’ transportation. Finding it

impossible to excite compassion, he gives vent to his feelings in an imprecation bearing reference to the eyes of "old big vig!" and as he declines to take the trouble of walking from the dock, he is forthwith carried out by two men, congratulating himself on having succeeded in giving every body as much trouble as possible.

SCOTLAND-YARD.

SCOTLAND-YARD is a small—a very small—tract of land, bounded on one side by the river Thames, on the other by the gardens of Northumberland-house; abutting at one end on the bottom of Northumberland-street, at the other on the back of Whitehall-place. When this territory was first accidentally discovered by a country gentleman who lost his way in the Strand, some years ago, the original settlers were found to be a tailor, a publican, two eating-house-keepers, and a fruit-pie-maker; and it was also found to contain a race of strong and bulky men, who repaired to the wharves in Scotland-yard regularly every morning about five or six o'clock, to fill heavy wagons with coal, with which they proceeded to distant places up the country, and supplied the inhabitants with fuel. When they had emptied their wagons, they again returned for a fresh supply; and this trade was continued throughout the year.

As the settlers derived their subsistence from ministering to the wants of these primitive traders, the articles exposed for sale, and the places where they were sold, bore strong outward marks of being expressly adapted to their tastes and wishes. The tailor

displayed in his window, a Lilliputian pair of leathern gaiters and a diminutive round frock, while each door-post was appropriately garnished with a model of a coal sack. The two eating-house keepers, exhibited joints of a magnitude, and puddings of a solidity, which coal-heavers alone could appreciate; and the fruit-pie-maker displayed on his well scrubbed window-board, large white compositions of flour and dripping ornamented with pink stains, giving rich promise of the fruit within, which made their huge mouths water, as they lingered past.

But the choicest spot in all Scotland-yard, was the old public-house in the corner. Here, in a dark, wainscoted room, of ancient appearance, cheered by the glow of a mighty fire, and decorated with an enormous clock, whereof the face was white, and the figures black, sat the lusty coal-heavers, quaffing large draughts of Barclay's best, and puffing forth volumes of smoke, which wreathed heavily above their heads, and involved the room in a thick, dark cloud. From this apartment might their voices be heard on a winter's night, penetrating to the very bank of the river, as they shouted out some sturdy chorus, or roared forth the burden of a popular song; dwelling upon the last few words with a strength and length of emphasis which made the very roof tremble above them.

Here, too, would they tell old legends of what the Thames was in ancient times, when the Patent Shot Manufactory wasn't built, and the Waterloo-bridge had never been thought of; and then they would shake their heads with portentous looks, to the deep edification of the rising generation of heavers, who crowded round them, and wonder where all this would end; whereat the tailor would take his pipe

solemnly from his mouth, and say how that he hoped it might end well, but he very much doubted whether it would or not, and couldn't rightly tell what to make of it—a mysterious expression of opinion, delivered with a semi-prophetic air, which never failed to elicit the fullest concurrence of the assembled company; and so they would go on drinking and wondering till ten o'clock came, and with it the tailor's wife to fetch him home, when the little party broke up, to meet again in the same room, and say and do precisely the same things on the following evening at the same hour.

About this time the barges that came up the river began to bring vague rumours to Scotland-yard of somebody in the city having been heard to say that the Lord Mayor had threatened in so many words to pull down the old London-bridge, and build up a new one. At first these rumours were disregarded as idle tales, wholly destitute of foundation, for nobody in Scotland-yard doubted that if the Lord Mayor contemplated any such dark design, he would just be clapped up in the Tower for a week or two, and then killed off for high treason.

By degrees, however, the reports grew stronger, and more frequent, and at last a barge, laden with numerous chaldrons of the best Wallsend, brought up the positive intelligence that several of the arches of the old bridge were stopped, and that preparations were actually in progress for constructing the new one. What an excitement was visible in the old tap-room on that memorable night! Each man looked into his neighbour's face, pale with alarm and astonishment, and read therein an echo of the sentiments which filled his own breast. The oldest heaver present proved to demonstration, that the moment the

piers were removed, all the water in the Thames would run clean off, and leave a dry gulley in its place. What was to become of the coal-barges—of the trade of Scotland-yard—of the very existence of its population? The tailor shook his head more sagely than usual, and grimly pointing to a knife upon the table, bid them wait and see what happened. He said nothing—not he; but if the Lord Mayor didn't fall a victim to popular indignation, why he would be rather astonished; that was all.

They did wait; barge after barge arrived, and still no tidings of the assassination of the Lord Mayor. The first stone was laid; it was done by a Duke—the King's brother. Years passed away, and the bridge was opened by the King himself. In the course of time, the piers were removed; and when the people in Scotland-yard got up next morning in the confident expectation of being able to step over to Pedlar's Acre without wetting the soles of their shoes, they found to their unspeakable astonishment that the water was just where it used to be!

A result so different from that which they had anticipated from this first improvement, produced its full effect upon the inhabitants of Scotland-yard. One of the eating-house-keepers began to court public opinion, and to look for customers among a new class of people. He covered his little dining-tables with white cloths, and got a painter's apprentice to inscribe something about hot joints from twelve till two, in one of the little panes of his shop-window. Improvement began to march with rapid strides to the very threshold of Scotland-yard. A new market sprung up at Hungerford, and the Police Commissioners established their office in Whitehall-place. The traffic in Scotland-yard increased; fresh Mem-

bers were added to the House of Commons, the Metropolitan Representatives found it a near cut, and many other foot passengers followed their example.

We marked the advance of civilization, and beheld it with a sigh. The eating-house-keeper who manfully resisted the innovation of table-cloths, was losing ground every day, as his opponent gained it; a deadly feud sprung up between them. The genteel one no longer took his evening's pint in Scotland-yard, but drank gin and water at a "parlour" in Parliament-street. The fruit-pie-maker still continued to visit the old room, but he took to smoking cigars, and began to call himself a pastry-cook, and to read the papers. The old heavers still assembled round the ancient fire-place, but their talk was mournful: and the loud song and the joyous shout were heard no more.

And what is Scotland-yard now? How have its old customs changed; and how has the ancient simplicity of its inhabitants faded away! The old tottering public-house is converted into a spacious and lofty "wine-vaults;" gold leaf has been used in the construction of the letters which emblazon its exterior, and the poet's art has been called into requisition, to intimate that if you drink a certain description of ale, you must hold fast by the rail. The tailor exhibits in his window the pattern of a foreign-looking brown surtout, with silk buttons, a fur collar and fur cuffs. He wears a stripe down the outside of each leg of his trousers: and we have detected his assistants (for he has assistants now) in the act of sitting on the shop-board in the same uniform.

At the other end of the little row of houses a boot-maker has established himself in a brick box, with the additional innovation of a first floor: and here he

exposes for sale, boots—real Wellington boots—an article which a few years ago, none of the original inhabitants had ever seen or heard of. It was but the other day, that a dress-maker opened another little box in the middle of the row; and, when we thought that the spirit of change could produce no alteration beyond that, a jeweller appeared, and not content with exposing gilt rings and copper bracelets out of number, put up an announcement, which still sticks in his window, that ladies' ears may be pierced within. The dress-maker employs a young lady who wears pockets in her apron; and the tailor informs the public that gentlemen may have their own materials made up.

Amidst all this change, and restlessness, and innovation, there remains but one old man, who seems to mourn the downfall of this ancient place. He holds no converse with human kind, but, seated on a wooden bench at the angle of the wall which fronts the crossing from Whitehall-place, watches in silence the gambols of his sleek and well-fed dogs. He is the presiding genius of Scotland-yard. Years and years have rolled over his head; but, in fine weather or in foul, hot or cold, wet or dry, hail, rain, or snow, he is still in his accustomed spot. Misery and want are depicted in his countenance; his form is bent by age, his head is gray with length of trial, but there he sits from day to day, brooding over the past; and thither he will continue to drag his feeble limbs, until his eyes have closed upon Scotland-yard, and upon the world together.

A few years hence, and the antiquarian of another generation, looking into some mouldy record of the strife and passions that agitated the world in these times, may glance his eye over the pages we have

just filled: and on all his knowledge of the history of the past not all his black-letter lore, or his skill in book-collecting, not all the dry studies of a long life, or the dusty volumes that have cost him a fortune, may help him to the whereabouts, either of Scotland-yard, or of any one of the land-marks we have mentioned in describing it.

THE NEW YEAR.

NEXT to Christmas day, the most pleasant annual epoch in existence is the advent of the New Year. Here are a lachrymose set of people who usher in the New Year with watching and fasting, as if they were bound to attend as chief mourners at the obsequies of the old one. Now we cannot but think it a great deal more complimentary, both to the old year that has rolled away, and to the New Year that is just beginning to dawn upon us, to see the old fellow out, and the new one in, with gaiety and glee.

There must have been some few occurrences in the past year to which we can look back with a smile of cheerful recollection, if not with a feeling of heartfelt thankfulness. And we are bound by every rule of justice and equity to give the New Year credit for being a good one, until he proves himself unworthy the confidence we repose in him.

This is our view of the matter; and entertaining it, notwithstanding our respect for the old year, one of the few remaining moments of whose existence passes with every word we write, here we are, seated by our fireside on this last night of the old year, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-six, penning this

article, and quaffing our grog, with as jolly a face as if nothing extraordinary had happened, or was about to happen, to disturb our equanimity.

Hackney coaches and carriages keep rattling up the street and down the street in rapid succession, conveying, doubtless, smartly dressed coach-fulls to crowded parties; loud and repeated double knocks at the house with green blinds opposite, announce to the whole neighbourhood that there's one large party in the street at all events; and we saw through the window, and through the fog too, till it grew so thick that we rung for candles, and drew our curtains, pastry-cooks' men with green boxes on their heads, and rout-furniture-warehouse-carts, with cane seats and French lamps, hurrying to the numerous houses where an annual festival is held in honour of the occasion.

We can fancy one of these parties, we think, as well as if we were duly dress-coated and pumped, and had just been announced at the drawing-room door.

Take the house with green blinds for instance. We know it's a quadrille party, because we saw a man taking up the front drawing-room carpet while we sat at breakfast this morning, and if farther evidence be required, and we must tell the truth, we just now saw one of the young ladies "doing" another of the young ladies' hair, near one of the bedroom windows, in an unusual style of splendour, which nothing else but a quadrille party could possibly justify.

The master of the house with the green blinds is in a public office; we know the fact by the cut of his coat, the tie of his neckcloth, and the self-satisfaction of his gait—the very green blinds themselves have a Somerset House air about them.

Hark! a cab! that's a junior clerk in the same office, a tidy sort of young man, with a tendency to

cold and corns, who comes in a pair of boots with black cloth fronts, and brings his shoes in his coat-pocket, which shoes he is at this very moment putting on in the hall. Now he is announced by the man in the passage to another man in a blue coat—a disguised messenger from the office.

The man on the first landing precedes him to the drawing-room door, "Mr. Tupples!" shouts the messenger. "How are you, Tupples?" says the master of the house, advancing from the fire, before which he has been talking politics and airing himself. "My dear, this is Mr. Tupples (a courteous salute from the lady of the house;) Tupples, my eldest daughter; Julia, my dear, Mr. Tupples; Tupples, my other daughters, my son, sir;" and Tupples rubs his hands very hard, and smiles as if it were all capital fun, and keeps constantly bowing, and turning himself round, till the whole family have been introduced, when he glides into a chair at the corner of the sofa, and opens a miscellaneous conversation with the young ladies, upon the weather, and the theatres, and the old year, and the last new murder, and the balloon, and the ladies' sleeves, and the festivities of the season, and a great many other topics of small-talk beside.

More double knocks! what an extensive party! what an incessant hum of conversation and general sipping of coffee! We see Tupples now, in our mind's eye, in the very height of his glory. He has just handed that stout old lady's cup to the servant, and now he dives among the crowd of young men by the door, to intercept the other servant, and secure the muffin plate for the old lady's daughter, before he leaves the room; and as he passes the sofa on his way back, he bestows a glance of recognition and patronage upon the young ladies, as condescending and familiar as if he had known them from their infancy.

Charming person that Mr. Tupples—perfect ladies' man—such a delightful companion, too. Laugh!—nobody ever understood papa's jokes half so well as Mr. Tupples, who laughs himself into convulsions at every fresh burst of facetiousness. Most delightful partner!—talks through the whole set; and, although he does seem at first rather gay and frivolous, so romantic and with so *much* feeling! Quite a love. No great favourite with the young men, certainly, who sneer at, and affect to despise him, but every body knows that's only envy, and they needn't give themselves the trouble to depreciate his merits at any rate, for Ma says he shall be asked to every future dinner party, if it's only to talk to people between the courses, and to distract their attention when there's any unexpected delay in the kitchen.

At supper, Mr. Tupples shows to still greater advantage than he has done throughout the evening, and when Pa requests every one to fill their glasses for the purpose of drinking happiness throughout the year, Mr. Tupples is so droll, insisting on all the young ladies having their glasses filled, notwithstanding their repeated assurances that they never can, by any possibility, think of emptying them: and subsequently begging permission to say a few words on the sentiment which has just been uttered by Pa; when he makes one of the most brilliant and poetical speeches that can possibly be imagined, about the old year and the new one. After the toast has been drunk, and when the ladies have retired, Mr. Tupples requests that every gentleman will do him the favour of filling his glass, for he has a toast to propose; on which all the gentlemen cry, "Hear! hear!" and pass the decanters accordingly; and Mr. Tupples being informed by the master of the house that they are all charged, and waiting for his toast, rises and begs to remind the

gentlemen present, how much they have been delighted by the dazzling array of elegance and beauty which the drawing-room has exhibited that night, and how their senses have been charmed, and their hearts captivated, by the bewitching concentration of female loveliness which that very room so recently displayed. (Loud cries of hear!) Much as he (Tupples) would be disposed to deplore the absence of the ladies, on other grounds, he cannot but derive some consolation from the reflection that the very circumstance of their not being present, enables him to propose a toast, which he would have otherwise been prevented from giving—that toast he begs to say is—"The Ladies" (great applause.) The Ladies! among whom the fascinating daughters of their excellent host, are alike conspicuous for their beauty, their accomplishments, and their elegance. He begs them to drain a bumper to "The Ladies," and a happy new year to them. (Prolonged approbation, above which the noise of the ladies dancing the Spanish dance among themselves, over head, is distinctly audible.)

The applause consequent on this toast has scarcely subsided, when a young gentleman in a pink under waistcoat, towards the bottom of the table, is observed to grow very restless and fidgetty, and to evince strong indications of some latent desire to give vent to his feelings in a speech, which the wary Tupples at once perceiving, determines to forestall by speaking himself. He, therefore, rises again with an air of solemn importance, and trusts he may be permitted to propose another toast (unqualified approbation, and Mr. Tupples proceeds;) he is sure they must all be deeply impressed with the hospitality—he may say the splendour—with which they have been that night received by their worthy host and hostess (unbounded applause.) Although this is the first occasion on

which he has had the pleasure and delight of sitting at that board, he has known his friend Dobble long and intimately; he has been connected with him in business—he wishes every body present knew Dobble as well as he does (a cough from the host.) He (Tupple) can lay his hand upon his (Tupple's) heart, and declare his confident belief that a better man, a better husband, a better father, a better brother, a better son, a better relation in any relation of life, than Dobble, never existed. (Loud cries of "hear!") They have seen him to-night in the peaceful bosom of his family; they should see him in the morning, in the trying duties of his office. Calm in the perusal of the morning papers, uncompromising in the signature of his name, dignified in his replies to the inquiries of strange applicants, deferential in his behaviour to his superiors, majestic in his deportment to the messengers.—(Cheers.) When he bears this merited testimony to the excellent qualities of his friend Dobble, what can he say in approaching such a subject as Mrs. Dobble? Is it requisite for him to expatiate on the qualities of that amiable woman? No; he will spare his friend Dobble's feelings; he will spare the feelings of his friend—if he will allow him to have the honour of calling him so.—Mr. Dobble, jun. (Here Mr. Dobble, jun., who has been previously distending his mouth to a considerable width, by thrusting a particularly fine orange into that feature, suspends operations, and assumes a proper appearance of intense melancholy.) He will simply say—and he is quite certain it is a sentiment in which all who hear him will readily concur—that his friend Dobble is as superior to any man he ever knew, as Mrs. Dobble is far beyond any woman he ever saw (except her daughters,) and he will conclude by pro-

posing their worthy "Host and Hostess, and may they live to enjoy many more new years."

The toast is drunk with acclamation—Dobble returns thanks—and the whole party rejoin the ladies in the drawing-room. Young men who were too bashful to dance before supper, find tongues and partners; the musicians exhibit unequivocal symptoms of having drunk the new year in, while the company were out; and dancing is kept up until far in the first morning of the new year.

We have scarcely written the last word of the previous sentence, when the first stroke of twelve, peals from the neighbouring churches—there is something awful in the sound. Strictly speaking it may not be more impressive now, than at any other time, for the hours steal as swiftly on at other periods, and their flight is little heeded. But we measure man's life by years, and it is a solemn knell that warns us we have passed another of the landmarks which stand between us and the grave; disguise it as we may, the reflection will force itself on our minds, that when next that bell announces the arrival of a new year, we may be insensible alike of the timely warning we have so often neglected, and of all the warm feelings that glow within us now.

But twelve has struck, and the bells ring merrily out, which welcome the new year. Away with all gloomy reflections. We were happy and merry in the last one, and will be, please God, in this. So as we are alone, and can neither dance it in, nor sing it in, here goes our glass to our lips, and a hearty welcome to the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, say we.

MEDITATIONS IN MONMOUTH-STREET.

WE have always entertained a particular attachment towards Monmouth-street, as the only true and real emporium for second-hand wearing apparel. Monmouth-street is venerable from its antiquity, and respectable from its usefulness. Holywell-street we despise; the red-headed and red whiskered Jews who forcibly haul you into their squalid houses, and thrust you into a suit of clothes, whether you will or not, we detest.

The inhabitants of Monmouth-street are a distinct class, a peaceable and retiring race, who immure themselves for the most part in deep cellars, or small back parlours, and who seldom come forth into the world, except in the dusk and coolness of evening, when they may be seen seated in chairs on the pavement, smoking their pipes or watching the gambols of their engaging children as they revel in the gutter, a happy troop of infantine scavengers. Their countenances bear a thoughtful and a dirty cast—certain indications of their love of traffic; and their habitations are distinguished by that disregard of outward appearance, and neglect of personal comfort, so common among people who are constantly immersed in profound speculations, and deeply engaged in sedentary pursuits.

We have hinted at the antiquity of our favourite spot. •“ A Monmouth-street laced coat ” was a by-word many years ago; and still we find Monmouth-street the same. Pilot great coats with wooden buttons, have usurped the place of the ponderous laced coats with full skirts; embroidered waistcoats with large flaps, have yielded to double-breasted checks with roll-collars; and three-cornered hats of quaint appearance, have given place to the low crowns and broad brims of the coachman school; but it is the times that have changed, not Monmouth-street. Through every alteration and every change, Monmouth-street has still remained the burial-place of the fashions; and such, to judge from all present appearances, it will remain, until there are no more fashions to bury.

We love to walk among these extensive groves of the illustrious dead, and to indulge in the speculations to which they give rise; now fitting a deceased coat, then a dead pair of trousers, and anon the mortal remains of a gaudy waistcoat, upon some being of our own conjuring up, and endeavouring, from the shape and fashion of the garment itself, to bring its former owner before our mind's eye. We have gone on speculating in this way, until whole rows of coats have started from their pegs, and buttoned up, of their own accord, round the waists of imaginary wearers; lines of trousers have jumped down to meet them; waistcoats have almost burst with anxiety to put themselves on; and half an acre of shoes have suddenly found feet to fit them, and gone stumping down the street with a noise which has fairly awakened us from our pleasant reverie, and driven us slowly away, with a bewildered stare, an object of astonishment to the good people of Monmouth-street, and of no slight suspicion to the policemen at the opposite street corner.

We were occupied in this manner the other day, en-

deavouring to fit a pair of lace-up half-boots on an ideal personage, for whom, to say the truth, they were full a couple of sizes too small, when our eyes happened to alight on a few suits of clothes ranged outside a shop window, which it immediately struck us, must at different periods have all belonged to, and been worn by, the same individual, and had now, by one of those strange conjunctions of circumstances which will occur sometimes, come to be exposed together for sale in the same shop. The idea seemed a fantastic one, and we looked at the clothes again, with a firm determination not to be easily led away. No, we were right; the more we looked, the more we were convinced of the accuracy of our previous impressions. There was the man's whole life written as legibly on those clothes, as if we had his autobiography engrossed on parchment before us.

The first was a patched and much-soiled little skeleton suit—one of those strait blue cloth cases in which small boys used to be confined, before belts and tunics had come in, and old notions had gone out: an ingenious contrivance for displaying the full symmetry of a boy's figure, by fastening him into a very tight jacket, with an ornamental row of buttons over his shoulder, and then buttoning his trousers over it, so as to give his legs the appearance of being hooked on, just under the arm-pits. This was the boy's dress. It had belonged to a town boy, we could see; there was a shortness about the legs and arms of the suit, and a bagging at the knees, peculiar to the rising youth of London-streets. A small day-school he had been at, evidently. If it had been a regular boy's school they wouldn't have let him play on the floor so much, and rub his knees so white. He had had an indulgent mother too, and plenty of halfpence, as the numerous smears of some sticky substance about the pockets,

and just below the chin, which even the salesman's skill could not succeed in disguising, sufficiently betokened. They were decent people, but not overburdened with riches, or he would not have so far outgrown the suit when he passed into those corduroys with the round jacket; in which he went to a boys' school; however, and learnt to write—and in ink of pretty tolerable blackness too, if the place where he used to wipe his pen might be taken as evidence.

A black suit, and the jacket changed into a diminutive coat. His father had died, and the mother had got the boy a message-lad's place in some office. A long-worn suit that one; rusty and threadbare before it was laid aside, but clean and free from soil to the last. Poor woman! We could imagine her assumed cheerfulness over the scanty meal, and the refusal of her own small portion, that her hungry boy might have enough. Her constant anxiety for his welfare, her pride in his growth, mingled sometimes with the thought, almost too acute to bear, that as he grew to be a man his old affection might cool, old kindnesses fade from his mind, and old promises be forgotten—the sharp pain that even then a careless word or a cold look would give her—all crowded on our thoughts as vividly as if the very scene were passing before us.

These things happen every hour, and we all know it; and yet we felt as much sorrow when we saw, or fancied we saw—it makes no difference which—the change that began to take place now, as if we had just conceived the bare possibility of such a thing for the first time. The next suit, smart but slovenly; meant to be gay, and yet not half so decent as the threadbare apparel; redolent of the idle lounge, and the black-guard companions, told us, we thought, that the widow's comfort had rapidly faded away. We could imagine that coat—imagine! we could see it; we *had* seen it a

hundred times—sauntering in company with three or four other coats of the same cut, about some place of profligate resort at night.

We dressed, from the same shop-window in an instant, half a dozen boys of from fifteen to twenty; and putting cigars into their mouths, and their hands in their pockets, watched them as they sauntered down the street, and lingered at the corner with the obscene jest, and the often-repeated oath. We never lost sight of them, 'till they had cocked their hats a little more on one side, and swaggered into the public-house; and then we entered the desolate home, where the mother sat, late in the night, alone: we watched her, as she paced the room in feverish anxiety, and every now and then opened the door, looked wistfully into the dark and empty street, and again returned, to be again and again disappointed. We beheld the look of patience with which she bore the brutish threat, and the drunken blow; and we heard the agony of tears that gushed from her very heart, as she sunk upon her knees in her solitary and wretched chamber.

A long period had elapsed, and a greater change had taken place, by the time of casting off the suit that hung above. It was that of a stout, broad-shouldered, sturdy-chested man; and we knew at once, as any body would, who glanced at that broad-skirted green coat, with the large metal buttons, that its wearer seldom walked forth, without a dog at his heels, and some idle ruffian, the very counterpart of himself, at his side. The vices of the boy had grown with the man, and we fancied his home then—if such a place deserved the name.

We saw the bare and miserable room, destitute of furniture, crowded with his wife and children, pale, hungry and emaciated; the man cursing their lamentations, staggering to the tap-room, from whence he

had just returned, followed by his wife and a sickly infant, clamouring for bread; and heard the street wrangle and noisy recrimination that his striking her, occasioned. And then imagination led us to some metropolitan workhouse, situated in the midst of crowded streets and alleys, filled with noxious vapours, and ringing with boisterous cries, where an old and feeble woman, imploring pardon for her son, lay dying in a close dark room, with no child to clasp her hand, and no pure air from Heaven to fan her brow. A stranger closed the eyes that settled into a cold unmeaning glare, and strange ears received the words that murmured from the white and half-closed lips.

A coarse round frock, with a worn cotton neckerchief, and other articles of clothing of the commonest description, completed the history. A prison, and the sentence—banishment or the gallows. What would the man have given then, to be once again the contented humble drudge of his boyish years—to have restored to life, but for a week, a day, an hour, a minute—only for so long a time as would enable him to say one word of passionate regret to, and hear one sound of heartfelt forgiveness from—the cold and ghastly form that lay rotting in the pauper's grave? The children wild in the streets, the mother a destitute widow; both deeply tainted with the deep disgrace of the husband and father's name, and impelled by sheer necessity, down the precipice that had led him to a lingering death, possibly of many years' duration, thousands of miles away. We had no clew to the end of the tale; but it was easy to guess its termination. We took a step or two farther on, and by way of restoring the naturally cheerful tone of our thoughts, began fitting visionary feet and legs into a cellar-board full of boots and shoes, with a speed and accuracy that would have astonished the most expert

artist in leather, living. There was one pair of boots in particular—a jolly, good-tempered, hearty-looking pair of tops—that excited our warmest regard; and we had got a fine red-faced jovial fellow of a market-gardener into them, before we had made their acquaintance half a minute. They were just the very thing for him. There were his huge fat legs bulging over the tops, and fitting them too tight to admit of his tucking in the loops he had pulled them on by; and his knee-cords with an interval of stocking; and his blue apron tucked up round his waist; and his red neckerchief and blue coat, and a white hat stuck on one side of his head; and there he stood with a broad grin on his great red face, whistling away, as if any other idea but that of being happy and comfortable had never entered his brain.

This was the very man after our own heart—we knew all about him—we had seen him coming up to Covent-garden in his green chaise-cart, with the fat tubby little horse, half a thousand times; and even while we cast an affectionate look upon his boots, at that instant, the form of a coquettish servant-maid suddenly sprung into a pair of Denmark satin shoes that stood beside them, and we at once recognised the very girl who accepted his offer of a ride, just on this side the Hammersmith suspension-bridge, the very last Tuesday morning we rode into town from Richmond.

A very smart female, in a showy bonnet, stepped into a pair of gray cloth boots with black fringe and binding, that were studiously pointing out their toes on the other side of the top-boots, and seemed very anxious to engage his attention, but we didn't observe that our friend the market gardener, appeared at all captivated with these blandishments; for beyond giving a knowing wink when they first began, as if to

imply that he quite understood their end and object, he took no farther notice of them. His indifference, however, was amply recompensed by the excessive gallantry of a very old gentleman with a silver-headed stick, who tottered into a pair of large list shoes that were standing in one corner of the board, and indulged in a variety of gestures expressive of his admiration of the lady in the cloth boots, to the immeasurable amusement of a young fellow we put into a pair of long-quartered pumps, who we thought would have split the coat that slid down to meet him, with laughing.

We had been looking on at this little pantomime with great satisfaction for some time, when, to our unspeakable astonishment, we perceived that the whole of the characters, including a numerous *corps de ballet* of boots and shoes in the back-ground, into which we had been hastily thrusting as many feet as we could press into the service, were arranging themselves in order for dancing; and some music striking up at the moment, to it they went without delay. It was perfectly delightful to witness the agility of the market-gardener. Out went the boots, first on one side, then on the other, then cutting, then shuffling, then setting to the Denmark satins, then advancing, then retreating, then going round, and then repeating the whole of the evolutions again, without appearing to suffer in the least from the violence of the exercise.

Now were the Denmark satins a bit behindhand, for they jumped and bounded about, in all directions; and, though they were neither so regular, nor so true to the time as the cloth boots, still, as they seemed to do it from the heart, and to enjoy it more, we candidly confess that we preferred their style of dancing to the other. But the old gentleman in the list shoes was the most amusing object in the whole party; for

besides his grotesque attempts to appear youthful and amorous, which were sufficiently entertaining in themselves, the young fellow in the pumps managed so artfully, that every time the old gentleman advanced to salute the lady in the cloth boots, he trod with his whole weight on the old fellow's toes, which made him roar with anguish, and rendered all the others like to die of laughing.

We were in the full enjoyment of these festivities when we heard a shrill, and by no means musical voice, exclaim, "Hope you'll know me again, impudence!" and on looking intently forward to see from whence the sound came, we found that it proceeded, not from the young lady in the cloth boots, as we had at first been inclined to suppose, but from a bulky lady of elderly-appearance, who was seated in a chair at the head of the cellar-steps, apparently for the purpose of superintending the sale of the articles arranged there.

A barrel-organ, which had been in full force close behind us, ceased playing; the people we had been fitting into the shoes and boots took to flight at the interruption; and as we were conscious that in the depth of our meditations we might have been rudely staring at the old lady for half an hour without knowing it, we took to flight too, and were soon immersed in the deepest obscurity of the adjacent "Dials."

OUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOURS.

WE are very fond of speculating as we walk through a street on the character and pursuits of the people who inhabit it; and nothing so materially assists us in these speculations as the appearance of the house doors. The various expressions of the human countenance afford a beautiful and interesting study; but there is something in the physiognomy of street-door knockers, almost as characteristic, and nearly as infallible. Whenever we visit a man for the first time, we contemplate the features of his knocker with the greatest curiosity, for we well know, that between the man and his knocker, there will inevitably be a greater or less degree of resemblance and sympathy.

For instance, there is one description of knocker that used to be common enough, but which is fast passing away—a large round one, with the jolly face of a convivial lion smiling blandly at you, as you twist the sides of your hair into a curl, or pull up your shirt collar while you are waiting for the door to be opened; we never saw that knocker on the door of a churlish man—so far as our experience is concerned, it invariably bespoke hospitality and another bottle.

No man ever saw this knocker on the door of a small attorney or bill-broker; they always patronise the other lion—a heavy ferocious-looking fellow, with a countenance expressive of savage stupidity—a sort of grand master among the knockers, and a great favourite with the selfish and brutal.

Then there is a little pert Egyptian knocker, with a long thin face, a pinched up nose, and a very sharp chin; he is most in vogue with your government-office people; in light drabs and starched cravats; little spare priggish men, who are perfectly satisfied with their own opinions, and consider themselves of paramount importance.

We were greatly troubled a few years ago, by the innovation of a new kind of knocker, without any face at all, composed of a wreath, depending from a hand, or small truncheon. A little trouble and attention, however, enabled us to overcome this difficulty, and to reconcile the new system to our favourite theory. You will invariably find this knocker on the doors of cold and formal people, who always ask you why you *don't* come, and never say *do*.

Every body knows the brass knocker is common to suburban villas, and extensive boarding-schools; and having noticed this genus we have recapitulated all the most prominent and strongly defined species.

Some phrenologists affirm, that the agitation of a man's brain by different passions, produces corresponding developments in the form of his skull. Do not let us be understood as pushing our theory to the length of asserting, that any alteration in a man's disposition would produce a visible effect on the feature of his knocker. Our position merely is, that in such a case, the magnetism which must exist between a man and his knocker, would induce the man to remove and seek some knocker more congenial to his

altered feelings. If you ever find a man changing his habitation without any reasonable pretext, depend upon it, that although he may not be aware of the fact himself, it is because he and his knocker are at variance.

Entertaining these feelings on the subject of knockers, it will be readily imagined with what consternation we viewed the entire removal of the knocker from the door of the next house to the one we lived in, some time ago, and the substitution of a bell. This was a calamity we had never anticipated. The bare idea of any body being able to exist without a knocker, appeared so wild and visionary, that it had never for one instant entered our imagination.

We sauntered moodily from the spot, and bent our steps toward Eaton Square, then just building. What was our astonishment and indignation to find that bells were fast becoming the rule, and knockers the exception! Our theory trembled beneath the shock. We hastened home; and fancying we foresaw in the swift progress of events, its entire abolition, resolved from that day forward, to vent our speculations on our next-door neighbours in person. The house adjoining ours on the left hand was uninhabited, and we had, therefore, plenty of leisure to observe our next-door neighbours on the other side.

The house without the knocker was in the occupation of a city clerk, and there was a neatly written bill in the parlour window, intimating that lodgings for a single gentleman were to be let within.

It was a neat, dull little house, on the shady side of the way, with new, narrow floor-cloth in the passage, and new narrow stair-carpet up to the first floor. The paper was new, and the paint was new, and the furniture was new, and all three, paper, paint, and furniture, bespoke the limited means of the

tenant. There was a little red and black carpet in the drawing-room, with a border of flooring all the way round; a few stained chairs, and a pembroke table. A pink shell was displayed on each of the little sideboards, which, with the addition of a tea-tray and caddy, a few more shells on the mantelpiece, and three peacocks' feathers tastefully arranged above them, completed the decorative furniture of the apartment.

This was the room destined for the reception of the single gentleman during the day, and a little back room on the same floor was assigned as his sleeping apartment by night.

The bill had not been long in the window, when a stout good-humoured looking gentleman, of about five-and-thirty, appeared as a candidate for the tenancy. Terms were soon arranged, for the bill was taken down immediately after his first visit; in a day or two the single gentleman came in, and shortly afterwards his real character came out.

First of all, he displayed a most extraordinary partiality for sitting up till three or four o'clock in the morning, drinking whisky and water, and smoking cigars; then he invited friends home, who used to come at ten o'clock, and begin to get happy about the small hours, when they evinced their perfect contentment by singing songs with half-a-dozen verses of two lines each, and a chorus of ten, which chorus used to be shouted forth by the whole strength of the company, in the most enthusiastic and vociferous manner, to the great annoyance of the neighbours, and the special discomfort of another single gentleman over head.

Now this was bad enough, occurring as it did three times a week on the average, but this was not all; for when the company *did* go away, instead of walking

quietly down the street, as any body else's company would have done, they amused themselves by making alarming and frightful noises, and counterfeiting the shrieks of females in distress; and one night, a red-faced gentleman in a white hat, knocked in a most urgent manner at the door of the powdered headed old gentleman at No. 3, and when the powdered headed old gentleman, who thought one of his married daughters must have been taken ill prematurely, had groped down stairs, and after a great deal of unbolting and key-turning, opened the street door, the red-faced man in the white hat, said, he hoped he'd *excuse* his giving him so much trouble, but he'd feel obliged if he'd favour him with a glass of cold spring water, and the loan of a shilling for a cab to take him home, on which the old gentleman slammed the door, and went up stairs, and threw the contents of his water jug out of the window—very straight, only it went over the wrong man; and the whole street was involved in confusion.

A joke's a joke: and even practical jests are very capital in their way, if you can only get the other party to see the fun of them, but the population of our street were so dull of apprehension, as to be quite lost to a sense of the drollery of this proceeding: and the consequence was, that our next-door neighbour was obliged to tell the single gentleman, that unless he gave up entertaining his friends at home, he really must be compelled to part with him. The single gentleman received the remonstrance with great good humour, and promised from that time forward, to spend his evenings at a coffee house—a determination which afforded general and unmixed satisfaction.

The next night passed off very well—every body was delighted with the change, but on the next, the noises were renewed with greater spirit than ever. The

single gentleman's friends being unable to see him in his own house every alternate night, had come to the determination of seeing him home every night; and what with the discordant greeting of the friends at parting, and the noise created by the single gentleman in his passage up stairs, and his subsequent struggles to get his boots off, the evil was not to be borne. So our next-door neighbour gave the single gentleman, who was a very good lodger in other respects, notice to quit; and the single gentleman went away, and entertained his friends in other lodgings.

The next applicant for the vacant first floor, was of a very different character from the troublesome single gentleman who had just quitted it. He was a tall, thin, young gentleman, with a profusion of brown hair, reddish whiskers, and very slightly developed mustachios. He wore a braided surtout, with frogs behind, light gray trousers, and wash-leather gloves, and had altogether rather a military appearance. So unlike the roystering single gentleman! Such insinuating manners, and such a delightful address! So seriously disposed, too! When he first came to look at the lodgings, he inquired most particularly whether he was sure to be able to get a seat in the parish church, and when he had agreed to take them, he requested to have a list of the different local charities, as he intended to subscribe his mite to the most deserving among them.

Our next-door neighbour was perfectly happy. He had got a lodger at last, of just his own way of thinking—a serious, well-disposed man, who abhorred gaiety, and loved retirement. He took down the bill with a light heart, and pictured in imagination a long series of quiet Sundays, on which he and his lodger would exchange mutual civilities and Sunday papers.

The serious man arrived, and his luggage was to

arrive from the country next morning. He borrowed a clean shirt, and a prayer-book, from our next-door neighbour, and retired to rest at an early hour, requesting that he might be called punctually at ten o'clock next morning—not before, as he was much fatigued.

He *was* called, and did not answer; he was called again, but there was no reply. Our next-door neighbour became alarmed and burst the door open. The serious man had left the house mysteriously; carrying with him the shirt, the prayer-book, a tea-spoon, and the bed-clothes.

Whether this occurrence, coupled with the irregularities of his former lodger, gave our next-door neighbour an aversion to single gentlemen, we know not; we only know that the next bill which made its appearance in the parlour window intimated, generally, that there were furnished apartments to let on the first floor. The bill was soon removed. The new lodgers at first attracted our curiosity, and afterwards excited our interest.

They were a young lad of eighteen or nineteen, and his mother, a lady of about fifty, or it might be less. The mother wore a widow's weeds, and the boy was also clothed in deep mourning. They were poor—very poor; for their only means of support, arose from the pittance the boy earned, by copying writings, and translating for the booksellers.

They had removed from some country place and settled in London; partly because it afforded better chances of employment for the boy, and partly, perhaps, with the natural desire to leave a place where they had been in better circumstances, and where their poverty was known. They were proud under their reverses, and above revealing their wants and

privations to strangers. How bitter those privations were, and how hard the boy worked to remove them, no one ever knew but themselves. Night after night, two, three, four hours after midnight, could we hear the occasional raking up of the scanty fire, or the hollow and half-stifled cough, which indicated his being still at work; and day after day, could we see more plainly, that nature had set that unearthly light in his plaintive face, which is the beacon of her worst disease.

Actuated, we hope, by a higher feeling than mere curiosity, we contrived to establish first an acquaintance, and then a close intimacy, with the poor strangers. Our worst fears were realized—the boy was sinking fast. Through a part of the winter, and the whole of the following spring and summer, his labours were unceasingly prolonged; and the mother attempted to procure needle-work, embroidery—any thing for bread.

A few shillings now and then, were all she could earn. The boy worked steadily on; dying by minutes, but never once giving utterance to complaint or murmur.

It was a beautiful autumn evening when we went to pay our customary visit to the invalid. His little remaining strength had been decreasing rapidly for two or three days preceding, and he was lying on the sofa at the open window, gazing at the setting sun. His mother had been reading the Bible to him, for she closed the book as we entered, and advanced to meet us. "I was telling William," she said, "that we must manage to take him into the country somewhere, so that he may get quite well. He is not ill, you know; but he is not very strong, and has exerted himself too much lately." Poor thing! The tears that streamed

through her fingers, as she turned aside, as if to adjust her close widow's cap, too plainly showed how fruitless was the attempt to deceive herself.

The boy placed one hand in ours, grasped his mother's arm with the other, drew her hastily towards him, and fervently kissed her cheek. There was a short pause. He sunk back upon his pillow, and looked with appalling earnestness in his mother's face. "William, William!" said the terrified parent, "don't look at me so—speak to me, dear!" The boy smiled languidly, but an instant afterwards his features resolved into the same cold, solemn gaze.

"William, dear William!" said the distracted mother, "rouse yourself, dear; don't look at me so, love—pray don't! Oh, my God! what shall I do!—my dear, dear boy!—he is dying!"

The boy raised himself by a violent effort, and folded his hands together—"Mother! dear, dear mother; bury me in the open fields, any where but in these dreadful streets. I should like to be where you can see my grave, mother, but not in these close crowded streets; they have killed me; kiss me again, mother; put your arm round my neck — —"

He fell back—a strange expression stole upon his features; not of pain or suffering, but an indescribable fixing of every line and muscle—the boy was dead.

THE HOSPITAL PATIENT.

IN our rambles through the streets of London after evening has set in, we have often paused beneath the windows of some public hospital, and pictured to ourselves the gloomy and mournful scenes that were passing within. The sudden moving of a taper as its feeble ray shot from window after window, until its light gradually disappeared, as if it were carried farther back into the room to the bed-side of some suffering patient, has been enough to awaken a whole crowd of reflections; the mere glimmering of the low-burning lamps, which, when all other habitations are wrapped in darkness and slumber, denote the chamber where so many forms are writhing with pain, or wasting with disease, has been sufficient to check the most boisterous merriment.

Who can tell the anguish of those weary hours, when the only sound the sick man hears, is the disjointed wanderings of some feverish slumberer near him, the low moan of pain, or perhaps the muttered, long-forgotten prayer of a dying man? Who but those who have felt it, can imagine the sense of loneliness and desolation which must be the portion of those, who in the hour of dangerous illness are left to be tended by strangers; for what hands, be they ever so

gentle; can wipe the clammy brow, or smooth the restless bed, like those of mother, wife, or child?

Impressed with these thoughts, we have turned away, through the nearly-deserted streets; and the sight of the few miserable creatures still hovering about them, has not tended to lessen the pain which such meditations awaken. The hospital is a refuge and resting-place for hundreds, who but for such institutions must die in the streets and door-ways; but what can be the feelings of outcasts like these, when they are stretched on the bed of sickness with scarcely a hope of recovery? The wretched woman who lingers about the pavement, hours after midnight, and the miserable shadow of a man—the ghastly remnant that want and drunkenness have left—which crouches beneath a window-ledge, to sleep where there is some shelter from the rain, have little to bind them to life, but what have they to look back upon, in death? What are the unwonted comforts of a roof and a bed to them, when the recollections of a whole life of debasement stalk before them; when repentance seems a mockery, and sorrow comes too late?

About a twelvemonth ago, as we were strolling through Covent-garden (we had been thinking about these things overnight) we were attracted by the very prepossessing appearance of a pickpocket, who having declined to take the trouble of walking to the Police-office, on the ground that he hadn't the slightest wish to go there at all, was being conveyed thither in a wheelbarrow, to the huge delight of a crowd, but apparently not very much to his own individual gratification.

Somehow we never can resist joining a crowd—nature certainly intended us for a vagabond—so we turned back with the mob, and entered the office, in company with our friend, the pickpocket, a couple of

policemen, and as many dirty-faced spectators as could squeeze their way in.

There was a powerful, ill-looking young fellow at the bar, who was undergoing an examination, on the very common charge of having, on the previous night, ill-treated a woman, with whom he lived in some court hard by. Several witnesses bore testimony to acts of the grossest brutality; and a certificate was read from the house-surgeon of a neighbouring hospital, describing the nature of the injuries the woman had received, and intimating that her recovery was extremely doubtful.

Some question appeared to have been raised about the identity of the prisoner; for when it was agreed that the two magistrates should visit the hospital at eight o'clock that evening, to take her deposition, it was settled that the man should be taken there also. He turned deadly pale at this, and we saw him clench the bar very hard, when the order was given. He was removed directly afterwards, and he spoke not a word.

We felt an irrepressible curiosity to witness this interview, although it is hard to tell why at this instant, for we knew it must be a painful one. It was no very difficult matter for us to gain permission, and we obtained it.

The prisoner, and the officer who had him in custody, were already at the hospital when we reached it, and waiting the arrival of the magistrates in a small room below stairs. The man was handcuffed, and his hat was pulled forward over his eyes. It was easy to see, though, by the livid whiteness of his countenance, and the constant twitching of the muscles of his face, that he dreaded what was to come. After a short interval, the magistrates and clerk were bowed in, by the house-surgeon and a couple of young men who

smelt very strongly of tobacco-smoke—they were introduced as “dressers”—and after one magistrate had complained bitterly of the cold, and the other of the absence of any news in the evening paper, it was announced that the patient was prepared: and we were conducted to the “casualty ward” in which she was lying.

The dim light which burnt in the spacious room, increased rather than diminished the ghastly appearance of the hapless creatures in the beds, which were ranged in two long rows on either side. In one bed lay a child enveloped in bandages, with its body half consumed by fire; in another, a female, rendered hideous by some dreadful accident, was wildly beating her clenched fists on the coverlet, in an agony of pain; on a third, there lay stretched a young girl, apparently in that heavy stupor which is sometimes the immediate precursor of death: her face was stained with blood, and her breast and arms were bound up in folds of linen. Two or three of the beds were empty, and their recent occupants were sitting beside them, with faces so wan, and eyes so bright and glossy, that it was fearful to meet their gaze. On every face was stamped the expression of anguish and suffering.

The object of the visit, was lying at the upper end of the room. She was a fine young woman of about two or three and twenty. Her long black hair had been hastily cut from about the wounds on her head, and streamed over the pillow in jagged and matted locks. Her face bore frightful marks of the ill-usage she had received: her hand was pressed upon her side, as if her chief pain were there; her breathing was short and heavy; and it was plain to see that she was dying fast. She murmured a few words in reply to the magistrate's inquiry, whether she was in great pain; and having been raised on the pillow by the

nurse, looked anxiously into the strange countenances that surrounded her bed. The magistrate nodded to the officer, to bring the man forward. He did so, and stationed him at the bed-side. The girl looked on, with a wild and troubled expression of face; but her sight was dim, and she did not know him.

"Take off his hat," said the magistrate. The officer did as he was desired, and the man's features were fully disclosed.

The girl started up, with an energy quite preternatural; the fire gleamed in her heavy eyes, and the blood rushed to her pale and sunken cheeks. It was a convulsive effort. She fell back upon her pillow, and covering her scarred and bruised face with her hands, burst into tears. The man cast an anxious look towards her, but otherwise appeared wholly unmoved. After a brief pause the nature of their errand was explained, and the oath tendered.

"Oh, no, gentlemen," said the girl, raising herself once more, and folding her hands together; "no, no, gentlemen! I did it myself—it was nobody's fault—it was an accident. He didn't hurt me; he wouldn't for the world. Jack, dear Jack, you know you wouldn't."

Her sight was fast failing her, and her hand groped over the bed-clothes in search of his, in vain. Brute as the man was, he was not prepared for this. He turned his face from the bed, and sobbed aloud. The girl's colour changed, and her breathing grew more difficult. She was evidently dying.

"We respect the feelings which prompt you to this," said the gentleman who had spoken first, "but let me warn you, not to persist in what you know to be untrue, until it is too late. It cannot save him."

"Jack," murmured the girl, laying her hand upon his arm, "they shall not persuade me to swear your

life away. He didn't do it, gentlemen. He never hurt me." She grasped his arm tightly, and added, in a broken whisper, "I hope God Almighty will forgive me all the wrong I have done, and the life I have led. God bless you, Jack. Some kind gentleman take my love to my poor old father. Five years ago, he said he wished I had died a child. Oh, I wish I had! I wish I had!"

The nurse bent over the girl for a few seconds, and then drew the sheet over her face. It covered a corpse.

SEVEN DIALS.

WE have always been of opinion that if Tom King and the Frenchman had not immortalized Seven Dials, Seven Dials would have immortalized itself. Seven Dials! the region of song and poetry—first effusions, and last dying speeches: hallowed by the names of Catnac and of Pitts—names that will intertwine themselves with costermongers, and barrel organs, when penny magazines shall have superseded penny yards of song, and capital punishment be unknown!

Look at the construction of the place. The gordian knot was all very well in its way: so was the maze of Hampton Court: so is the maze at the Beulah Spa: so were the ties of stiff white neckcloths, when the difficulty of getting one on, was only to be equalled by the apparent impossibility of ever getting it off again. But what involutions can compare with those of Seven Dials—where is there such another maze of streets, courts, lanes, and alleys—where such a pure mixture of Englishmen and Irishmen, as in this complicated part of London? We boldly aver that we doubt the

veracity of the legend to which we have adverted. We *can* suppose a man rash enough to inquire at random—at a house with lodgers too—for a Mr. Thompson, with all but the certainty before his eyes, of finding at least two or three Thompsons in any house of moderate dimensions; but a Frenchman—a Frenchman—in Seven Dials! Pooh! He was an Irishman. Tom King's education had been neglected in his infancy, and as he couldn't understand half the man said, he took it for granted he was talking French.

The stranger who finds himself in "The Dials" for the first time, and stands Belzoni-like, at the entrance of seven obscure passages, uncertain which to take, will see enough around him to keep his curiosity and attention awake, for no inconsiderable time. From the irregular square into which he has plunged, the streets and courts dart in all directions, until they are lost in the unwholesome vapour which hangs over the house-tops, and renders the dirty perspective, uncertain and confined; and lounging at every corner, as if they came there to take a few gasps of such fresh air as has found its way so far, but is too much exhausted already, to be enabled to force itself into the narrow alleys around, are groups of people, whose appearance and dwellings would fill any mind but a regular Londoner's with astonishment.

On one side, a little crowd has collected round a couple of ladies, who having imbibed the contents of various "three-outs" of gin and bitters in the course of the morning, have at length differed on some point of domestic arrangement, and are on the eve of settling the quarrel satisfactorily, by an appeal to blows, greatly to the interest of other ladies who live in the same house, and tenements adjoining, and who are all partisans on one side or other.

"Vy don't you pitch into her, Sarah?" exclaims one half-dress matron, by way of encouragement. "Vy don't you? if *my* 'usband had treated her with a drain last night, unbeknown to me, I'd tear her precious eyes out—a wixen!"

"What's the matter, ma'am?" inquires another old woman, who has just bustled up to the spot.

"Matter!" replies the first speaker, talking *at* the obnoxious combatant, "matter! - Here's poor dear Mrs. Sulliwin, as has five blessed children of her own, can't go out a charing for one arternoon, but what hussies must be a comin', and 'ticing away her oun' 'usband, as she's been married to twelve year come next Easter Monday, for I see the certificate when I was a drinkin' a cup o' tea vith her, only the wery last blessed Ven'sday as ever vos sent. I 'appen'd to say promiscuously, 'Mrs. Sulliwin,' says I—,"

"What do you mean by hussies?" interrupts a champion of the other party, who has evinced a strong inclination throughout to get up a branch fight on her own account. ("Hoo-roa," ejaculates a pot-boy in a parenthesis, "put the kye-bosh on her, Mary.") "What do you mean by hussies?" reiterates the champion.

"Niver mind," replies the opposition, expressively, "niver mind; *you* go home, and, ven you're quite sober, mend your stockings."

This somewhat personal allusion, not only to the lady's habits of intemperance, but also to the state of her wardrobe, rouses her utmost ire, and she accordingly complies with the urgent request of the bystanders to "pitch in," with considerable alacrity. The scuffle becomes general, and terminates, in minor

play-bill phraseology, with "arrival of the policemen—interior of the station-house—and impressive *dénouement*."

In addition to the numerous groups who are idling about the gin shops, and squabbling in the centre of the road, every post in the open space has its occupant, who leans against it for hours, with listless perseverance. It is odd enough, that one class of men in London, appear to have no enjoyment beyond leaning against posts. We never saw a regular brick-layer's labourer take any other recreation—fighting excepted. Pass through St. Giles's in the evening of a week-day:—there they are in their fustian dresses, spotted with brick-dust and whitewash—leaning against posts. Walk through Seven Dials on Sunday morning: there they are again—drab, or light corde-roy trousers, blucher boots, blue coats, and great yellow waistcoats—leaning against posts. The idea of a man dressing himself in his best clothes, to lean against a post all day!

The peculiar character of these streets, and the close resemblance each one bears to its neighbour, by no means tends to decrease the bewilderment in which the unexperienced wayfarer through "the Dials" finds himself involved. He traverses streets of dirty, straggling houses, with now and then an unexpected court, composed of buildings as ill-proportioned and deformed as the half-naked children that wallow in the kennels. Here and there, a little dark chandler's shop, with a cracked bell hung up behind the door, to announce the entrance of a customer, or betray the presence of some young gentleman in whom a passion for shop tills, has developed itself at an early age, others as if for support against some handsome, lofty building, which usurps the place of a low dingy

public house; long rows of broken and patched windows expose plants that may have flourished when "the Dials" were built, in vessels as dirty as "the Dials" themselves; and shops for the purchase of rags, bones, old iron, and kitchen stuff, vie in cleanliness with the bird-fanciers' and rabbit-dealers', which one might fancy so many arks, but for the irresistible conviction that no bird in its proper senses, who was permitted to leave one of them, would ever come back again. Brokers' shops, which would seem to have been established by humane individuals, as refuges for destitute bugs, interspersed with announcements of day schools, penny theatres, petition-writers, mangles, and music for balls or routs, complete the "still life" of the subject; and dirty men, filthy women, squalid children, fluttering shuttlecocks, noisy battle-dores, reeking pipes, bad fruit, more than doubtful oysters, attenuated cats, depressed dogs, and anatomical fowls, are its cheerful accompaniments.

If the external appearance of the houses, or a glance at their inhabitants, present but few attractions, a closer acquaintance with either is little calculated to alter one's first impression. Every room has its separate tenant, and every tenant is—by the same mysterious dispensation which causes a country curate to "increase and multiply" most marvellously—generally the head of a numerous family.

The man in the shop, perhaps, is in the baked "jemmy" line, or the fire-wood and hearth-stone line, or any other line which requires a floating capital of eighteen pence or thereabouts; and he and his family live in the shop, and the small back parlour behind it. Then there is an Irish labourer and *his* family in the back kitchen; and a jobbing man—carpet-beater and so forth—with *his* family in the front

one. In the front one-pair, there's another man with another wife and family, and in the back one-pair there's "a young ooman as takes in tambour-work, and dresses quite genteel," who talks a good deal about "my friend," and "can't abear any thing low." The second floor front, and the rest of the lodgers, are just a second edition of the people below, except a shabby-genteel man in the back attic, who has his half-pint of coffee every morning, from the coffee-shop next door but one, which boasts a little front den called a coffee-room, with a fire-place, over which is an inscription, politely requesting that, "to prevent mistakes," customers will "please to pay on delivery." The shabby-genteel man is an object of some mystery, but as he leads a life of seclusion, and never was known to buy any thing beyond an occasional pen, except half-pints of coffee, penny loaves, and ha'porths of ink, his fellow-lodgers very naturally suppose him to be an author; and rumours are current in the Dials, that he writes poems—for Mr. Warren.

Now any body who passed through the Dials on a hot summer's evening, and saw the different women in the house, gossiping on the steps, would be apt to think that all was harmony among them, and that a more primitive set of people than the native Diallers could not be imagined. Alas! the man in the shop ill-treats his family; the carpet-beater extends his professional pursuits to his wife; the one-pair front, has an undying feud with the two-pair front, in consequence of the two pair front persisting in dancing over his (the one-pair front's) head, when he and his family have retired for the night; the two-pair back *will* interfere with the front kitchen's children; the Irishman comes home drunk every other night; and attacks every body; and the one-pair back screams

at every thing. Animosity springs up between floor and floor; the very cellar asserts his equality. Mrs. A. "smacks" Mrs. B's. child, for "making faces." Mrs. B. forthwith throws cold water over Mrs. A's. child, for "calling names." The husbands are embroiled—the quarrel becomes general—an assault is the consequence, and a police officer the result.

THE MISTAKEN MILLINER.

A TALE OF AMBITION.

MISS AMELIA MARTIN was pale, tallish, thin, and two-and-thirty—what ill-natured people would call plain, and police reports interesting. She was a milliner and dress-maker, living on her business, and not above it. If you had been a young lady in service, and wanted Miss Martin, as a great many young ladies in service did, you'd just have stepped up, in the evening, to number forty-seven, Drummond-street, George-street, Euston-square, and after casting your eye on a brass door-plate, one foot ten, by one and a half, ornamented with a great brass knob at each of the four corners, and bearing the inscription—"Miss Martin; millinery and dress-making, in all its branches;" you'd just have knocked two loud knocks at the street door; and down would have come Miss Martin herself, in a merino gown of the newest fashion, black velvet bracelets on the genteelest principle, and other little elegancies, of the most approved description.

If Miss Martin knew the young lady who called, or if the young lady who called, had been recommended by any other young lady whom Miss Martin knew, Miss Martin would forthwith show her up-stairs into the two-pair front, and chat she would—*so* kind, and *so* comfortable—it really wasn't like a matter of business, she was so friendly; and then Miss Martin, after contemplating the figure and general appearance of the young lady in service with great apparent admiration, would say how well she would look, to be sure, in a low dress with short sleeves, made very full in the skirts, with four tucks in the bottom, to which the young lady in service would reply in terms expressive of her entire concurrence in the notion, and the virtuous indignation with which she reflected on the tyranny of "Missis," who wouldn't allow a young girl to wear a short sleeve of an ar'ternoon—no, nor nothing smart, not even a pair of ear-rings: let alone hiding people's heads of hair, under them frightful caps; at the termination of which complaint, Miss Amelia Martin would distantly suggest certain dark suspicions that some people were jealous on account of their own daughters, and where obliged to keep their servants' charms under, for fear they should get married first, which was no uncommon circumstance—leastways she had known two or three young ladies in service, who had married a great deal better than their missises, and *they* were not very good-looking either; and then the young lady would inform Miss Martin, in confidence, that how one of their young ladies was engaged to a young man, and was a-going to be married, and Missis was so proud about it, there was no bearing her; but she needn't hold her head quite so high neither, for, after all, he was only a clerk. And, after expressing a due contempt for clerks in general,

and the engaged clerk in particular, and the highest opinion possible of themselves, and each other, Miss Martin and the young lady in service would bid each other good night in a friendly but perfectly genteel manner: and the one went back to her "place," and the other, to her room on the second floor front.

There is no saying how long Miss Amelia Martin might have continued this course of life; how extensive a connexion she might have established among young ladies in service; or what amount her demands upon their quarterly receipts might have ultimately attained, had not an unforeseen train of circumstances directed her thoughts to a sphere of action very different from dress-making or millinery.

A friend of Miss Martin's, who had long been keeping company with an ornamental painter and decorator's journeyman, at last consented (on being at last asked to do so) to name the day which would make the aforesaid journeyman a happy husband. It was a Monday that was appointed for the celebration of the nuptials, and Miss Amelia Martin was invited, among others, to honour the wedding dinner with her presence. It was a charming party; Somers-town the locality, and a front parlour the apartment. The ornamental painter and decorator's journeyman, had taken a house—no lodgings nor vulgarity of that kind, but a house—four beautiful rooms and a delightful little wash-house at the end of the passage—most convenient thing in the world; for the bridesmaids could sit in the front parlour and receive the company, and then run into the little wash-house and see how the pudding and boiled pork were getting on in the copper, and then pop back into the parlour, as snug and comfortable as possible. And such a parlour as it was too! beautiful Kidderminster carpet—six brand new caned bottom stained chairs—three wine glasses

and a tumbler on each sideboard—a farmer's girl and a farmer's boy on the mantel-piece: one tumbling over a stile, and the other spitting himself, on the handle of a pitchfork—long white dimity curtains in the window—and, in short, every thing on the most genteel scale imaginable.

Then the dinner—baked leg of mutton at the top—boiled leg of mutton at the bottom—pair of fowls and a leg of pork in the middle—porter pots at the corners—pepper, mustard, and vinegar in the centre—vegetables on the floor—and plum-pudding and apple-pie, and tartlets without number, to say nothing of cheese, and celery, and water-cresses, and all that sort of thing. As to the company! Miss Amelia Martin herself declared, on a subsequent occasion, that much as she had heard of the ornamental painter's journeyman's connexion, she could never have supposed it was half so genteel. There was his father, such a funny old gentleman—and his mother, such a dear old lady—and his sister, such a charming girl—and his brother, such a manly-looking young man—with such an eye! But even all these were as nothing when compared with his musical friends, Mr. and Mrs. Jennings Rodolph, from White Conduit, with whom the ornamental painter's journeyman had been fortunate enough to contract an intimacy, while engaged in decorating the concert-room of that noble institution. To hear them sing separately, was perfectly divine, but when they went through the tragic duet of "Red Ruffian, retire!" it was, as Miss Martin afterwards remarked, "thrilling;" and why (as Mr. Jennings Rodolph observed)—why were they not engaged at one of the patent theatres? If he was to be told that their voices were not powerful enough, to fill the house, his only reply was, that he'd back himself for any amount to fill Russell-square—a statement in which the com-

pany, after hearing the duet, expressed their full belief; so they all said it was shameful treatment; and both Mr. and Mrs. Jennings Rodolph said it was shameful too, and Mr. Jennings Rodolph looked very serious, and said he knew who his malignant opponents were, but they had better take care how far they went, for if they irritated him too much, he had not quite made up his mind whether he wouldn't bring the subject before Parliament; and they all agreed that it "'ud serve 'em quite right, and it was very proper that such people should be made an example of." So Mr. Jennings Rodolph said he'd think of it.

When the conversation resumed its former tone, Mr. Jennings Rodolph claimed his right to call upon a lady, and the right being conceded, trusted Miss Martin would favour the company—a proposal which met with unanimous approbation: whereupon Miss Martin, after sundry hesitations and coughings, with a preparatory choke or two, and an introductory declaration that she was frightened to death, to attempt it, before such great judges of the art, commenced a species of treble chirruping, containing constant allusions to some young gentlemen of the name of Hen-e-ry, with an occasional reference to madness, and damaged hearts. Mr. Jennings Rodolph frequently interrupted the progress of the song, by ejaculating "beautiful!"—"charming!"—"brilliant!"—"oh! splendid," &c.; and at its close the admiration of himself, and his lady, knew no bounds.

"Did you ever hear so sweet a voice, my dear?" inquired Mr. Jennings Rodolph of Mrs. Jennings Rodolph.

"Never; indeed, I never did, love," replied Mrs. Jennings Rodolph.

"Don't you think Miss Martin with a little cultiva-

tion, would be very like Signora Marro Boni, my dear?" asked Mr. Jennings Rodolph."

"Just exactly the very thing that struck me, my love," answered Mrs. Jennings Rodolph. And thus the time passed away; first one sang, and then another. Mr. Jennings Rodolph played tunes on a walking-stick, and then went behind the parlour-door and gave his celebrated imitations of actors, edge-tools, and animals; Miss Martin sang several other songs with increased admiration every time, and even the funny old gentleman began singing; his song had properly seven verses, but as he couldn't recollect more than the first one; he sang that over, seven times, apparently very much to his own personal gratification. And then all the company sang the national anthem with national independence—each for himself, without reference to the other—and finally separated, all declaring that they never had spent so pleasant an evening; and Miss Martin inwardly resolving to adopt the advice of Mr. Jennings Rodolph, and to "come out" without delay.

Now "coming out," either in acting, or singing, or society, or facetiousness, or any thing else, is all very well, and remarkably pleasant to the individual principally concerned, if he or she can but manage to come out with a burst, and being out, to keep out, and not go in again; but it does unfortunately happen that both consummations are extremely difficult to accomplish, and that the difficulties of getting out, at all, in the first instance, and if you surmount them, of keeping out in the second, are pretty much on a par, and no slight ones either—and so Miss Amelia Martin shortly discovered. It is a singular fact (there being ladies in the case) that Miss Amelia Martin's principal foible was vanity, and the leading characteristic

of Mrs. Jennings Rodolph an attachment to dress. Dismal wailings were heard to issue from the second floor front of number forty-seven, Drummond-street, George-street, Euston-square; it was Miss Martin practising. Half-suppressed murmurs disturbed the calm dignity of the White Conduit orchestra at the commencement of the season. It was the appearance of Mrs. Jennings Rodolph in full dress, that occasioned them. Miss Martin studied incessantly—the practising was the consequence. Mrs. Jennings Rodolph taught gratuitously now and then—the dresses were the result.

Weeks passed away; the White Conduit season had begun, had progressed, and was more than half over. The dress-making business had fallen off, from neglect; and its profits had dwindled away, almost imperceptibly. A benefit-night approached; Mrs. Jennings Rodolph yielded to the earnest solicitations of Miss Amelia Martin, and introduced her personally to the “comic gentleman” whose benefit it was. The comic gentleman was all smiles and blandness—he had composed a duet expressly for the occasion, and Miss Martin should sing it with him. The night arrived; there was an immense room—ninety-seven six-penn’orths of gin and water, thirty-two small glasses of brandy and water, five-and-twenty bottled ales, and forty-one neguses; and the ornamental painter’s journeyman, with his wife, and a select circle of acquaintance were seated at one of the side-tables near the orchestra. The concert began. Song—sentimental—by a light-haired young gentleman in a blue coat, and bright basket buttons [applause.] Another song, doubtful, by another gentleman in another blue coat, and more bright basket buttons—[increased applause.] Duet, Mr. Jennings Rodolph and Mrs. Jennings Ro-

himself audible; and to this day, neither has Miss Amelia Martin's good humour been restored, nor the dresses made for, and presented to, Mrs. Jennings Rodolph, nor the vocal abilities which Mr. Jennings Rodolph once staked his professional reputation she possessed.

DOCTORS' COMMONS.

WALKING, without any definite object, through St. Paul's Church-yard, a little while ago, we happened to turn down a street entitled "Paul's-chain," and keeping straight forward for a few hundred yards, found ourselves, as a natural consequence, in Doctors' Commons. Now Doctors' Commons being familiar by name to every-body, as the place where they grant marriage-licenses to love-sick couples, and divorces to unfaithful ones; register the wills of people who have any property to leave, and punish hasty gentlemen who call ladies by unpleasant names, we no sooner discovered that we were really within its precincts, than we felt a laudable desire to become better acquainted therewith; and as the first object of our curiosity was the Court, whose decrees can even unloose the bonds of matrimony, we procured a direction to it, and bent our steps thither without delay.

Crossing a quiet and shady court-yard, paved with stone, and frowned upon by old red-brick houses, on the doors of which were painted the names of sundry learned civilians, we paused before a small, green-painted, brass-headed-nailed door, which yielding to our gentle push, at once admitted us into an old

quaint-looking apartment, with sunken windows, and black carved wainscoting, at the upper end of which, seated on a raised platform, of semicircular shape, were about a dozen solemn-looking gentlemen, in crimson gowns and wigs.

At a more elevated desk in the centre, sat a very fat and red-faced gentleman, in tortoise-shell spectacles, whose dignified appearance announced the judge; and round a long green-baized table below, something like a billiard-table without the cushions and pockets, were a number of very self-important looking personages, in stiff neck-cloths and black gowns with white fur collars, whom we at once set down as proctors. At the lower end of the billiard-table was an individual in an arm-chair, and a wig, whom we afterwards discovered to be the registrar; and seated behind a little desk, near the door, were a respectable-looking man, in black, of about twenty stone weight or thereabouts, and a fat-faced, smirking, civil-looking body, in a black gown, black kid gloves, knee shorts, and silks, with a shirt-frill in his bosom, curls on his head, and a silver staff in his hand, whom we had no difficulty in recognising as the officers of the Court. The latter, indeed, speedily set our mind at rest upon this point, for advancing to our elbow, and opening a conversation forthwith, he had communicated to us, in less than five minutes, that he was the apparitor, and the other the court-keeper; that this was the Arches Court, and therefore the counsel wore red gowns, and the proctors fur collars; and that when the other Courts sat there, they didn't wear red gowns or fur collars either; with many other scraps of intelligence equally interesting. Besides these two officers, there was a little thin old man with long grizzly hair, crouched in a remote corner, whose duty, our communicative friend informed us, was to ring a

large hand-bell when the Court opened in the morning, and who for aught his appearance betokened to the contrary, might have been similarly employed for the two last centuries at least.

The red-faced gentleman in the tortoise-shell spectacles had got all the talk to himself just then, and very well he was doing it, too, only he spoke very fast, but that was habit; and rather thick, but that was good living. So we had plenty of time to look about us. There was one individual who amused us mightily. This was one of the bewigged gentlemen in the red robes, who was straddling before the fire in the centre of the Court, in the attitude of the brazen Colossus, to the complete exclusion of every body else. He had gathered up his robe behind, in much the same manner as a slovenly woman would her petticoats on a very dirty day, in order that he might feel the full warmth of the fire. His wig was put on, all awry, with the tail straggling about his neck, his scanty gray trousers and short black gaiters, made in the worst possible style, imparted an additionally inelegant appearance to his uncouth person; and his limp, badly-starched shirt-collar almost obscured his eyes. We shall never be able to claim any credit as a physiognomist again, for after a careful scrutiny of this gentleman's countenance, we had come to the conclusion that it bespoke nothing but conceit and silliness, when our friend with the silver staff whispered in our ear that he was no other than a doctor of civil law, and heaven knows what besides. So of course we were mistaken, and he must be a very talented man. He conceals it so well though—perhaps with the merciful view of not astonishing ordinary people too much—that you would suppose him to be one of the stupidest dogs alive.

The gentleman in the spectacles having concluded

his judgment, and a few minutes having been allowed to elapse, to afford time for the buzz in the court to subside, the registrar called on the next cause, which was "the office of the Judge promoted by Bumble against Sludberry." A general movement was visible in the court, at this announcement, and the obliging functionary with the silver staff whispered us that "there would be some fun now, for this was a brawling case."

We were not rendered much the wiser by this piece of information, till we found by the opening speech of the counsel for the promoter, that, under a half-obsolete statute of one of the Edwards, the court was empowered to visit with the penalty of excommunication, any person who should be proved guilty of the crime of "brawling" or "smiting" in any church, or vestry-adjoining thereto; and it appeared, by some eight and-twenty affidavits, which were duly referred to, that on a certain night, at a certain vestry-meeting, in a certain parish particularly set forth, Thomas Sludberry, the party appeared against in that suit, had made use of, and applied, to Michael Bumble, the promoter, the words "You be blowed;" and that, on the said Michael Bumble and others remonstrating with the said Thomas Sludberry, on the impropriety of his conduct, the said Thomas Sludberry, repeated the aforesaid expression, "You be blowed;" and furthermore desired and requested to know, whether the said Michael Bumble, "wanted any thing for himself," adding, that if the said Michael Bumble did want any thing for himself, he, the said Thomas Sludberry, "was the man to give it him;" at the same time making use of other heinous and sinful expressions, all of which, Bumble submitted, came within the intent and meaning of the Act; and therefore he, for the soul's health and chastening of Slud-

berry prayed for sentence of excommunication against him accordingly.

Upon these facts, a long argument was entered into, on both sides, to the great edification of a number of persons interested in the parochial squabbles, who crowded the court; and when some very long and grave speeches had been made *pro* and *con*, the red-faced gentleman in the tortoise-shell spectacles took a review of the case, which occupied half an hour more, and then pronounced upon Sludberry the awful sentence of excommunication for a fortnight, and payment of the costs of the suit. Upon this, Sludberry, who was a little, red-faced, sly-looking, ginger-beer-seller, addressed the Court, and said, that if they'd be good enough to take off the costs, and excommunicate him for the term of his natural life instead, it would be much more convenient to him, for he never went to church at all. To this appeal the gentleman in the spectacles made no other reply than a look of virtuous propriety; and Sludberry and his friends retired. As the man with the silver-staff informed us that the Court was on the point of rising, we retired too—pondering, as we walked away, upon the beautiful spirit of these ancient ecclesiastical laws, the kind and neighbourly feelings they are calculated to awaken, and the strong attachment to religious institutions which they cannot fail to engender.

We were so lost in these meditations, that we had turned into the street, and run up against a door-post, before we recollected where we were walking. On looking upwards to see what house we had stumbled upon, the words "Prerogative-Office," written in large characters, met our eye; and as we were in a sight-seeing humour, and the place was a public one, we walked in, without more ado.

The room into which we walked, was a long, busy-looking place, partitioned off, on either side, into a variety of little boxes, in which a few clerks were engaged in copying or examining deeds. Down the centre of the room were several desks, nearly breast high, at each of which, three or four people were standing, poring over large volumes. As we knew that they were searching for wills, they attracted our attention at once.

It was curious to contrast the lazy indifference of the attorneys' clerks, who were making a search for some legal purpose, with the air of earnestness and interest which distinguished the strangers to the place, who were looking up the will of some deceased relative; the former pausing every now and then with an impatient yawn, or raising their heads to look at the people who passed up and down the room; the latter stooping over the book, and running down column after column of names in the deepest abstraction.

There was one little dirty-faced man in a blue apron, who after a whole morning's search, extending some fifty years back, had just found the will to which he wished to refer, which one of the officials was reading to him in a low hurried voice from a thick vellum book with large clasps. It was perfectly evident that the more the clerk read, the less the man with the blue apron understood about the matter. When the volume was first brought down, he took off his hat, smoothed down his hair, smiled with great self-satisfaction, and looked up in the reader's face with the air of a man who had made up his mind to recollect every word he heard. The first two or three lines were intelligible enough; but then the technicalities began, and the little man began to look rather dubious. Then came a whole string of complicated trusts, and he was regularly at sea. As the reader

proceeded, it was quite apparent that it was a hopeless case, and the little man, with his mouth open and his eyes fixed upon his face, looked on, with an expression of bewilderment and perplexity irresistibly ludicrous.

A little farther on, a hard-featured old man, with a deeply-wrinkled face, was intently perusing a lengthy will, with the aid of a pair of horn spectacles: occasionally pausing from his task, and slyly noting down some brief memorandum of the bequests contained in it. Every wrinkle about his toothless mouth, and sharp keen eyes, told of avarice and cunning. His clothes were nearly thread-bare, but it was easy to see that he wore them so, from choice, and not from necessity; all his looks and gestures down to the very small pinches of snuff which he every now and then took from a little tin canister, told of wealth, and penury, and avarice.

As he leisurely closed the register, put up his spectacles, and folded his scraps of paper in a large leathern pocket-book, we thought what a nice hard bargain he was driving with some poverty-stricken legatee, who, tired of waiting year after year, until some life-interest should fall in, was selling his chance, just as it began to grow most valuable, for a twelfth part of its worth. It was a good speculation—a very safe one. The old man stowed his pocket-book carefully in the breast of his great-coat, and hobbled away with a leer of triumph. That will had made him ten years younger, at the lowest computation.

Having commenced our observations, we should certainly have extended them to another dozen of people at least, had not a sudden shutting up, and putting away, of the worm-eaten old books, warned us that the time for closing the office had arrived; and thus deprived us of a pleasure, and spared our readers an infliction.

We naturally fell into a train of reflection as we walked homewards, upon the curious old records of likings and dislikings; of jealousies and revenges; of affection defying the power of death, and hatred pursued beyond the grave, which these depositories contain; silent but striking tokens, some of them, of excellence of heart, and nobleness of soul; melancholy examples, others, of the worst passions of human nature. How many men as they lay speechless and helpless on the bed of death, would have given worlds for but the strength and power to blot out the silent evidence of animosity and bitterness, which now stands registered against them, in Doctors' Commons!

MISPLACED ATTACHMENT OF MR. JOHN DOUNCE.

If we had to make a classification of society, there are a particular kind of men whom we should immediately set down under the head of "Old Boys;" and a column of most extensive dimensions the old boys would require. To what precise causes the rapid advance of old-boy population is to be traced, we are unable to determine; it would be an interesting and curious speculation, but as we have not sufficient space to devote to it here, we simply state the fact that the numbers of the old boys have been gradually augmenting within the last few years, and are at this moment alarmingly on the increase.

Upon a general view of the subject, and without considering it minutely in detail, we should be disposed to subdivide the old boys into two distinct classes—the gay old boys, and the steady old boys: the gay old boys are punchy old men in the disguise of young ones, who frequent the Quadrant and Regent-street in the day-time, and theatres (especially theatres under lady-management) at night, assuming all the foppishness and levity of boys, without the excuse of youth or inexperience; the steady old boys are cer-

tain stout old gentlemen of clean appearance, who are always to be seen in the same taverns, at the same hours every evening, smoking and drinking in the same company.

There was once a fine collection of old boys to be seen round the circular table at Offley's every night, between the hours of half-past eight and half-past eleven. We have lost sight of them for some time, but there are still two splendid specimens in full blossom at the Rainbow in Fleet-street, who always sit in the box nearest the fire-place, and smoke immense long cherry-stick pipes, which go under the table, with the bowls resting upon the floor. Grand old boys these are—fat, red-faced, white-headed old fellows; always there—one on one side the table, and the other opposite—puffing and drinking away like regular good ones, and never a bit the worse for it—every body knows them, and it is supposed by some people that they're both immortal.

Mr. John Dounce was an old boy of the latter class (we don't mean immortal, but steady)—a retired glove and braces-maker, a widower, resident with three daughters—all grown up, and all unmarried—in Cur-sitor-street, Chancery-lane. He was a short, round, large-faced, little, tubbish sort of a man, with a broad-brimmed hat, and a square coat; and had that grave, but confident kind of roll, peculiar to old boys in general. Regular as clock-work—breakfast at nine—dress and tittivate a little—down to the Sir Somebody's Head—glass of ale and the paper—come back again, and take the daughters out for a walk—dinner at three—glass of grog and a pipe—nap—tea—little walk—Sir Somebody's Head again—capital house!—delightful evenings! There were Mr. Harris, the law-stationer, and Mr. Jennings, the robe-maker (two jolly young fellows like himself,) and Jones, the barrister's clerk—

rum fellow that Jones—capital company—full of anecdote; and there they sat every night 'till just ten minutes before twelve, drinking their brandy and water, and smoking their pipes, and telling stories, and enjoying themselves; with a kind of solemn joviality particularly edifying.

Sometimes Jones would propose a half-price visit to Drury Lane or Covent Garden, to see two acts of a five-act play, and a new farce, perhaps, or a ballet; on which occasions the whole four of them went together; none of your hurrying and nonsense, but having their brandy and water first, comfortably, and ordering a steak and some oysters for their supper against they came back, and then walking coolly into the pit, when the "rush" had gone in, as all sensible people do, and did when Mr. Dounce was a young man, except when the celebrated Master Betty was at the height of his popularity, and then, sir,—then Mr. Dounce perfectly well remembered getting a holiday from business, and going to the pit doors at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and waiting there till six in the afternoon, with some sandwiches in a pocket handkerchief, and some wine in a phial, and fainting after all, with the heat and fatigue before the play began, in which situation he was lifted out of the pit into one of the dress boxes, sir, by five of the finest women of that day, sir, who compassionated his situation and administered restoratives, and sent a black servant, six foot high, in blue and silver livery, next morning with their compliments, and to know how he found himself, sir!—Between the acts, Mr. Dounce, and Mr. Harris, and Mr. Jennings used to stand up, and look round the house, and Jones—knowing fellow that Jones; knew every body—pointed out the fashionable and celebrated lady So-and-So in the boxes, at the mention of whose name, Mr.

Dounce, after brushing up his hair, and adjusting his neck-handkerchief, would inspect the aforesaid lady So-and-So through an immense glass, and remark either that she was a "fine woman—very fine woman, indeed," or that "there might be a little more of her,—Eh, Jones?" just as the case might happen to be. When the dancing began, John Dounce, and the other old boys, were particularly anxious to see what was going forward on the stage, and Jones—wicked dog, that Jones—whispered little critical remarks into the ears of John Dounce, which John Dounce retailed to Mr. Harris, and Mr. Harris to Mr. Jennings, and then they all four laughed 'till the tears ran down out of their eyes.

When the curtain fell, they walked back together, two and two, to the steaks and oysters, and when they came to the second glass of brandy and water, Jones—hoaxing scamp, that Jones—used to recount how he had observed a lady in white feathers in one of the pit boxes, gazing intently on Mr. Dounce all the evening, and how he had caught Mr. Dounce, whenever he thought no one was looking at him, bestowing ardent looks of intense devotion on the lady in return; on which Mr. Harris and Mr. Jennings used to laugh very heartily, and John Dounce more heartily than either of them, acknowledging, however, that the time *had* been when he *might* have done such things; upon which Mr. Jones used to poke him in the ribs, and tell him he had been a sad dog in his time, which John Dounce, with chuckles, confessed. And after Mr. Harris and Mr. Jennings had preferred their claims to the character of having been sad dogs too, they separated harmoniously, and trotted home.

The decrees of Fate, and the means by which they are brought about, are mysterious and inscrutable. John Dounce had led this life for twenty years and

upwards, without wish for change, or care for variety, when his whole social system was suddenly upset, and turned completely topsy-turvy—not by an earthquake, or some other dreadful convulsion of nature, as the reader would be inclined to suppose, but by the simple agency of an oyster; and thus it happened.

Mr. John Dounce was returning one night from the Sir Somebody's Head, to his residence in Cursitor-street—not tipsy, but rather excited; for it was Mr. Jennings's birth-day, and they had had a brace of partridges for supper, and a brace of extra glasses afterwards, and Jones had been more than ordinarily amusing—when his eyes rested on a newly-opened oyster shop, on a magnificent scale, with natives laid one deep in circular marble basins in the windows, together with little round barrels of oysters directed to Lords and Baronets, and Colonels and Captains, in every part of the habitable globe.

Behind the natives were the barrels, and behind the barrels was a young lady of about five-and-twenty, all in blue, and all alone—splendid creature, charming face, and lovely figure! It is difficult to say whether Mr. John Dounce's red countenance, illuminated as it was by the flickering gas-light in the window before which he paused, excited the lady's risibility, or whether a natural exuberance of animal spirits proved too much for that staidness of demeanour which the forms of society rather dictatorially prescribe; certain it is, that the lady smiled, then put her finger upon her lip, with a striking recollection of what was due to herself: and finally retired, in oyster-like bashfulness, to the very back of the counter. The sad-dog sort of feeling came strongly upon John Dounce: he lingered—the lady in blue made no sign. He coughed—still she came not. He entered the shop.

"Can you open me an oyster, my dear?" said Mr. John Dounce.

"Dare say I can, sir," replied the lady in blue, with enchanting playfulness. And Mr. John Dounce eat one oyster, and then looked at the young lady, and then eat another, and then squeezed the young lady's hand as she was opening the third, and so forth, until he had devoured a dozen of those at eight-pence, in less than no time.

"Can you open me half-a-dozen more, my dear?" inquired Mr. John Dounce.

"I'll see what I can do for you, sir," replied the young lady in blue, even more bewitchingly than before; and Mr. John Dounce eat half-a-dozen more of those at eight-pence, and felt his gallantry increasing at every minute.

"You couldn't manage to get me a glass of brandy and water, my dear, I suppose?" said Mr. John Dounce, when he had finished the oysters, in a tone which clearly implied his supposition that she could.

"I'll see, sir," said the young lady: and away she ran out of the shop, and down the street, her long auburn ringlets shaking in the wind, in the most enchanting manner; and back she came again, tripping over the coal-places like a whipping top, with a tumbler of brandy and water, which Mr. John Dounce insisted on her taking a share of, as it was regular ladies' grog—hot, strong, sweet, and plenty of it.

So the young lady sat down with Mr. John Dounce in a little red box with a green curtain, and took a small sip of the brandy and water, and a small look at Mr. John Dounce, and then turned her head away; and went through various other serio-pantomimic fascinations, which forcibly reminded Mr. John Dounce of the first time he courted his first wife, and which, taken conjointly with the hot brandy and water, and

the oysters, made him feel more affectionate than ever; in pursuance of which affection, and actuated by which feeling, Mr. John Dounce sounded the young lady on her matrimonial engagements, when the young lady denied having formed any such engagements at all—she couldn't abear the men, they was such deceivers; thereupon Mr. John Dounce inquired whether this sweeping condemnation was meant to include other than very young men; on which the young lady blushed deeply—at least she turned away her head, and said Mr. John Dounce had made her blush, so of course she *did* blush—and Mr. John Dounce was a long time drinking the brandy and water; and the young lady said "Ha' done, sir," very often; and at last John Dounce went home to bed, and dreamt of his first wife, and his second wife, and the young lady, and partridges and oysters, and brandy and water, and disinterested attachments.

The next morning, John Dounce was rather feverish with the extra brandy and water of the previous night; and partly in the hope of cooling himself with an oyster, and partly with the view of ascertaining whether he owed the young lady any thing, or not, went back to the oyster-shop. If the young lady had appeared beautiful by night, she was perfectly irresistible by day; and from this time forward, a change came over the spirit of John Dounce's dream. He bought shirt-pins; wore a ring on his third finger; read poetry; bribed a cheap miniature painter to perpetrate a faint resemblance to a youthful face, with a curtain over the head, six large books in the back ground, and an open country in the distance (this he called his portrait;) "went on" altogether in such an uproarious manner, that the three Miss Dounces went off on small pensions, he having made the tenement in Cursitor-street too warm to contain them; and, in

short, comported and demeaned himself in every respect like an unmitigated old Saracen, as he was.

As to his ancient friends, the other old boys, at the Sir Somebody's Head, he dropped off from them by gradual degrees; for even when he did go there, Jones vulgar fellow that Jones—persisted in asking “when it was to be?” and “whether he was to have any gloves?” together with other inquiries of an equally offensive nature, at which not only Harris laughed, but Jennings also, so he cut the two altogether, and attached himself solely to the blue young lady at the smart oyster-shop.

Now comes the moral of the story—for it has a moral after all. The last-mentioned young lady, having derived sufficient profit and emolument from John Dounce's attachment, not only refused, when matters came to a crisis, to take him for better for worse, but expressly declared, to use her own forcible words, that she wouldn't have him at no price; and John Dounce, having lost his old friends, alienated his relations, and rendered himself ridiculous to every body, made offers successively to a schoolmistress, a landlady, a feminine tobacconist, and a housekeeper; and being directly rejected by each and every of them, was accepted by his cook, with whom he now lives, a hen-pecked husband, a melancholy monument of antiquated misery, and a living warning to all uxorious old boys.

VAUXHALL GARDENS BY DAY.

THERE was a time when if a man ventured to wonder how Vauxhall-gardens would look by day, he was hailed with a shout of derision at the absurdity of the idea. Vauxhall by day-light! A porter-pot without porter, the House of Commons without the Speaker, a gas-lamp without the gas—pooh, nonsense, the thing was not to be thought of. It was rumoured, too, in those times, that Vauxhall-gardens by day, were the scene of secret and hidden experiments; that there, carvers were exercised in the mystic art of cutting a moderate-sized ham into slices thin enough to pave the whole of the grounds; that beneath the shade of the tall trees, studious men were constantly engaged in chemical experiments, with the view of discovering how much water a bowl of negus could possibly bear; and that in some retired nooks, appropriated to the study of ornithology, other sage and learned men were, by a process known only to themselves, incessantly employed in reducing fowls to a mere combination of skin and bone.

Vague rumours of this kind, together with many others of a similar nature, cast over Vauxhall-gardens an air of deep mystery; and as there is a great deal

in the mysterious, there is no doubt that, to a good many people, at all events, the pleasure they afforded was not a little enhanced by this very circumstance.

Of this class of people we confess to having made one. We loved to wander among these illuminated groves, thinking of the patient and laborious researches which had been carried on there during the day, and witnessing their results in the suppers which were served up beneath the light of lamps, and to the sound of music, at night. The temples, and saloons, and cosmoramas, and fountains glittered and sparkled before our eyes; the beauty of the lady singers and the elegant deportment of the gentlemen, captivated our hearts; a few hundred thousand of additional lamps dazzled our senses; a bowl or two of reeking punch bewildered our brains; and we were happy.

In an evil hour, the proprietors of Vauxhall-gardens took to opening them by day. We regretted this, as rudely and harshly disturbing that veil of mystery which had hung about the property for many years, and which none but the noon-day sun, and the late Mr. Simpson, had ever penetrated. We shrunk from going; at this moment we scarcely know why. Perhaps a morbid consciousness of approaching disappointment—perhaps a fatal presentiment—perhaps the weather; whatever it was, we did *not* go until the second or third announcement of a race between two balloons tempted us, and we went.

We paid our shilling at the gate, and then we saw, for the first time, that the entrance, if there had ever been any magic about it at all, was now decidedly disenchanted, being, in fact, nothing more nor less than a combination of very roughly-painted boards and saw-dust. We glanced at the orchestra and supper-room as we hurried past—we just recognised them and that was all. We bent our steps to the firework

ground; there, at least, we should not be disappointed. We reached it, and stood rooted to the spot with mortification and astonishment. *That* the Moorish tower—that wooden shed with a door in the centre, and daubs of crimson and yellow all round, like a gigantic watch-case! *That* the place where night after night we had beheld the undaunted Mr. Blackmore make his terrific ascent, surrounded by flames of fire, and peals of artillery, and where the white garments of Madame Somebody or other, who nobly devoted her life to the manufacture of fire-works, had so often been seen fluttering in the wind, as she called up a red, blue, or party-coloured light to illumine her temple! *That* the ————, but at this moment the bell rung; the people scampered away, pell-mell, to the spot from whence the sound proceeded; and we, from the mere force of habit, found ourself running among the first, as if for very life.

It was for the concert in the orchestra. A small party of dismal men in cocked hats were “executing” the overture to *Tancredi*, and a numerous assemblage of ladies and gentlemen, with their families, had rushed from their half-emptied stout mugs in the supper boxes, and crowded to the spot. Intense was the low murmur of admiration when a particularly small gentleman, in a dress coat, led on a particularly tall lady in a blue sarsnet pelisse and bonnet of the same, ornamented with large white feathers, and forthwith commenced a plaintive duet.

We knew the small gentleman well; we had seen a lithographed semblance of him, on many a piece of music, with his mouth wide open, as if in the act of singing; a wine glass in his hand; and a table with two decanters and four pine-apples on it, in the background. The tall lady, too, we had gazed on, lost in raptures of admiration, many and many a time—how

different people do look by day-light, and without punch, to be sure! It was a beautiful duet: first, the small gentleman asked a question, and then the tall lady answered it; then the small gentleman and the tall lady sang together most melodiously; then the small gentleman went through a little piece of vehemence by himself, and got very tenor indeed, in the excitement of his feelings, to which the tall lady responded in a similar manner; then the small gentleman had a shake or two, after which the tall lady had the same, and then they both merged imperceptibly into the original air; and the band wound themselves up to a pitch of fury, and the small gentleman handed the tall lady out, and the applause was rapturous.

The comic singer, however, was the especial favourite; we really thought that a gentleman, with his dinner in a pocket handkerchief, who stood near us, would have fainted with excess of joy. A fearfully facetious old man that comic singer is; his distinguishing characteristics are, a wig approaching to the flaxen, a turned-up nose, and an aged countenance, and he bears the name of one of the English counties, if we recollect right. He sang a song about the seven ages, the first half-hour of which seemed to afford the assembly the purest delight; of the rest we can make no report, as we did not stay to hear any more.

We walked about, and met with a disappointment at every turn; our favourite views were mere patches of paint; the fountain that had sparkled so showily by lamp-light, presented very much the appearance of a water-pipe that had burst; all the ornaments were dingy, and all the walks gloomy. There was a spectral attempt at rope-dancing in the little open theatre; the sun shone upon the spangled dresses of the performers, and their evolutions were about as inspiring and appropriate as a country dance in a family vault.

So we retraced our steps to the fire-work-ground, and mingled with the little crowd of people who were contemplating Mr. Green.

Some half-dozen men were restraining the impetuosity of one of the balloons, which was completely filled, and had the car already attached; and as rumours had gone abroad that a lord was "going up," the crowd were more than usually anxious and talkative. There was one little man in faded black, with a dirty face, and a rusty black neck-kerchief with a red border, tied in a narrow wisp round his neck, who entered into conversation with every body, and had something to say upon every remark that was made within his hearing. He was standing with his arms folded, staring up at the balloon, and every now and then vented his feelings of reverence for the aëronaut, by saying, as he looked round to catch somebody's eye, "He's a rum 'un is Green; think o' this here being up'ards of his two hundredth ascent; ecod, the man as is ekal to Green, never had the tooth-ache yet, nor wo'nt have, within this hundredth year, and that's all about it. Ven you meets with real talent, and native, too, encourage it, that's wot I say;" and when he had delivered himself to this effect, he would fold his arms with more determination than ever, and stare at the balloon with a sort of admiring defiance of any other man alive, beyond himself and Green, that impressed the crowd with the opinion that he was a regular oracle.

"Ah, you're very right, sir," said another gentleman, with his wife, and children, and mother, and wife's sister, and a host of female friends, in all the gentility of white pocket-handkerchiefs, frills, and spencers, "Mr. Green is a steady hand, sir, and there's no fear about him."

"Fear!" said the little man; "ain't it a lovely

thing to see him and his wife a going up in one balloon, and his own son and *his* wife a jostling up agin 'em in another, and all of 'em going twenty or thirty mile in three hours or so, and then coming back in pochaysea. I don't know where this here science is to stop, mind you; that's wot bothers me."

Here there was a considerable talking among the females in the spencers.

"Wot's the ladies a laughing at, sir?" inquired the little man, condescendingly.

"It's only my sister Mary," said one of the girls, "as says she hopes his lordship won't be frightened when he's in the car, and want to come out agin."

"Make yourself easy about that there, my dear," replied the little man. "If he was so much as to move a inch without leave, Green ud jist fetch him a crack over the head with a telescope, as ud send him into the bottom of the basket in no time, and stun him there till they come down again."

"Would he, though?" inquired the other man.

"Yes, would he," replied the little one, "and think nothing of it, neither, if he was the king himself. Green's presence of mind is wonderful."

Just at this moment all eyes were directed to the preparations which were being made for starting. The car was attached to the second balloon, the two were brought pretty close together, and a military band commenced playing, with a zeal and fervour which would render the most timid man in existence but too happy to accept any means of quitting that particular spot of earth on which they were stationed. Then Mr. Green, sen., and his noble companion entered one car, and Mr. Green, jun., and *his* companion the other; and then the balloons went up, and the aerial travellers stood up, and the crowd outside roared with delight, and the two gentlemen who had never as-

cended before, tried to wave their flags, as if they were not nervous, but held on very fast all the while; and the balloons were wafted gently away, our little friend solemnly protesting, long after they were reduced to mere specks in the air, that he could still distinguish the white hat of Mr. Green. The gardens disgorged their multitudes, boys ran up and down screaming "bal-loon," and in all the crowded thoroughfares people rushed out of their shops into the middle of the road, and having stared up in the air at two little black objects till they almost dislocated their necks, walked slowly in again, perfectly satisfied.

The next day there was a grand account of the ascent in the morning papers, and the public were informed how it was the finest day but four in Mr. Green's remembrance; how they retained sight of the earth till they lost it behind the clouds; and how the reflection of the balloon on the undulating masses of vapour was gorgeously picturesque; together with a little science about the refraction of the sun's rays, and some mysterious hints respecting atmospheric heat and eddy currents of air.

There was also an interesting account how a man in a boat was distinctly heard by Mr. Green, jun., to exclaim "My eye!" which Mr. Green, jun., attributed to his voice rising to the balloon, and the sound being thrown back from its surface into the car; and the whole concluded with a slight allusion to another ascent next Wednesday, all of which was very instructive and very amusing, as our readers will see if they look to the papers. If we have forgotten to mention the date, they have only to wait till next summer, and take the account of the first ascent, and it will answer the purpose equally well.

A PARLIAMENTARY SKETCH.

WITH A FEW PORTRAITS.

WE hope our readers will not be alarmed at the rather ominous title we have chosen. We assure them that we are not about to become political, neither have we the slightest intention of being more prosy than usual—if we can help it. It has occurred to us that a slight sketch of the general aspect of “the House,” and the crowds that resort to it on the night of an important debate, would be productive of some amusement; and as we have made some few calls at the aforesaid house in our time—have visited it quite often enough, for our purpose, and a great deal too often for our own personal peace and comfort—we have determined to attempt the description. Dismissing from our minds, therefore, all that feeling of awe, which vague ideas of breaches of privilege, Sergeant-at-Arms, heavy denunciations, and still heavier fees, are calculated to awaken, we enter at once into the building, and upon our subject.

Half-past four o'clock—and at five the mover of

the Address will be "on his legs," as the newspapers announce sometimes by way of novelty, as if speakers were occasionally in the habit of standing on their heads. What a scene of bustle and excitement! The members are pouring in, one after the other, in shoals. The few spectators who can obtain standing-room in the passages, scrutinize them as they pass, with the utmost interest, and the man who can identify a member occasionally, becomes a person of great importance. Every now and then you hear earnest whispers of "That's Sir John Thomson." "Which? him with the gilt order round his neck?" "No no: that's one of the messengers—that other with the yellow gloves, is Sir John Thomson." "Here's Mr. Smith," "Yes, how dy'e do, sir?—(He is our new member)—How do you do, sir?" Mr. Smith, stops: turns round, with an air of enchanting urbanity (for the rumour of an intended dissolution has been very extensively circulated this morning, seizes both the hands of his gratified constituent, and, after greeting him with the most enthusiastic warmth, rushes into the lobby with an extraordinary display of ardour in the public cause, leaving an immense impression in his favour on the mind of his "fellow townsmen."

The arrivals increase in number, and the heat and noise increase in very unpleasant proportion. The livery servants form a complete lane on either side of the passage, and you reduce yourself into the smallest possible space to avoid being turned out. You see that stout man with the hoarse voice, in the blue coat, queer crowned, broad brimmed hat, white corduroy breeches, and great boots who has been talking incessantly for half an hour past, and whose importance has occasioned no small quantity of mirth among the strangers. That's the great conservator of the peace of Westminster. You cannot fail to have remarked

the grace with which he saluted the noble Lord who passed just now, or the excessive dignity of his air, as he expostulates with the crowd. He is rather out of temper now, in consequence of the very irreverent behaviour of those two young fellows behind him, who have done nothing but laugh all the time they've been here.

"Will they divide to-night, do you think, Mr.—?" timidly inquires a little thin man in the crowd, hoping to conciliate the man of office.

"How *can* you ask such questions, sir?" replies the functionary, in an incredibly loud key, and pettishly grasping the thick stick he carries in his right hand. "Pray, do not, sir, I beg of you; pray do not, sir." Here the little man looks remarkably out of his element, and the uninitiated part of the throng are in positive convulsions of laughter.

Just at this moment some unfortunate individual appears, with a very smirking air, at the bottom of the long passage. He has managed to elude the vigilance of the special constable down stairs, and is evidently congratulating himself on having made his way so far.

"Go back, sir—you must *not* come here?" shouts the hoarse one, with tremendous emphasis of voice and gesture, the moment the offender catches his eye.

The stranger pauses.

"Do you hear, sir—will you go back?" continues the official dignitary, gently pushing the intruder some dozen yards.

"Come, don't push me," replies the stranger, turning angrily round.

"I will, sir."

"You wont, sir."

"Go out, sir."

"Take your hands off me, sir."

"Go out of the passage, sir."

"Your'e a Jack-in-office, sir."

"A what!" ejaculates he of the boots.

"A Jack-in-office, sir, and a very insolent fellow," reiterates the stranger, now completely in a passion.

"Pray do not force me to put you out, sir," retorts the other—"pray do not—my instructions are to keep this passage clear—it's the Speaker's orders, sir."

"D—n the Speaker, sir," shouts the intruder.

"Here, Wilson!—Collins!" gasps the officer, actually paralyzed at this insulting expression, which in his mind is all but high treason; "take this man out—take him out, I say! How dare you, sir?" &c., and down goes the unfortunate man five stairs at a time, turning round at every stoppage, to come back again, and denouncing bitter vengeance against the Commander-in-Chief, and all his supernumeraries.

"Make way, gentlemen,—pray make way for the Members, I beg of you," shouts the zealous officer, turning back, and preceding a whole string of the liberal and independent. You see this ferocious-looking personage, with a complexion almost as sallow as his linen, and whose large black mustachies would give him the appearance of a figure in a hair-dresser's window, if his countenance possessed the intelligence which is communicated to those waxen caricatures of the human face divine. He is a militia-officer, and (quite unintentionally) the most amusing person in the House. Can any thing be more exquisitely absurd than the burlesque grandeur of his air, as he strides up to the lobby, his eyes rolling like those of a Turk's head in a cheap Dutch clock? He never appears without that bundle of dirty papers which he carries under his left arm; they are generally supposed to be the miscellaneous estimates for 1804, or some equally

important documents. He is very punctual in his attendance at the House, and his self-satisfied "He-ar-He-ar," is not unfrequently the signal for a general titter. This is the man who once actually sent a messenger up to the Strangers' gallery in the old House of Commons, to inquire the name of a gentleman who was using an eye-glass, in order that he might complain to the Speaker that the individual in question was quizzing him! On another occasion, he is reputed to have repaired to Bellamy's kitchen—a refreshment room where persons who are not members are admitted on sufferance, as it were—and perceiving two or three gentlemen at supper, who he was aware were not Members, and could not in that place very well resent his behaviour, he indulged in the exquisite pleasantry and facetiousness of sitting with his booted leg on the table at which they were supping! He is generally harmless though, and his absurdities are amusing enough.

By dint of patience, and some little interest with our friend the constable, we have contrived to make our way to the Lobby, and you can just manage to catch an occasional glimpse of the House, as the door is opened for the admission of Members. It is tolerably full already, and little groups of Members are congregated together here, discussing the interesting topic of the day.

That smart-looking fellow in the black coat with velvet facings and cuffs, who wears his *D'Orsay* hat so rakishly, is "Honest Tom," a metropolitan representative; and the large man in the cloak with the white lining—not the man by the pillar; the other with the light hair hanging over his coat collar behind,—is his colleague. That quiet gentlemanly-looking man in the blue surtout, gray trousers, white neck-kerchief and gloves, whose closely-buttoned

coat displays his manly figure and broad chest to great advantage, is a very well-known character. He has fought a great many battles in his time, and conquered like the heroes of old, with no other arms than those the gods gave him. The old hard-featured man who is standing near him, is really a good specimen of a class of men—and now nearly extinct. He is a county member, and has been, from time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary. Look at his loose wide brown coat, with capacious pockets on each side; the knee-breeches and boots, the immensely long waistcoat, and silver watch chain dangling below it, the wide-brimmed brown hat, and the white handkerchief tied in a great bow with straggling ends sticking out beyond his shirt frill. It is a costume one seldom sees now a-days, and when the few who wear it have died off, it will be quite extinct. He can tell you long stories of Fox, Pitt, Sheridan, and Canning, and how much better the House was managed in those times, when they used to get up at eight or nine o'clock, except on regular field-days, of which every body was apprized before hand. He has a great contempt for all young Members of Parliament, and thinks it quite impossible that a man can say any thing worth hearing, unless he has sat in the House for fifteen years at least, without saying any thing at all. He is of opinion that "that young Macaulay" was a regular impostor; he allows, that Lord Stanley may do something one of these days, but "he's too young, sir—too young." He is an excellent authority on points of precedent, and when he grows talkative, after his wine, will tell you how Sir Somebody Something, when he was whipper-in for the Government, brought four men out of their beds to vote in the majority, three of whom died on their way home again; how the House once divided on

the question, that fresh candles be now brought in; how the Speaker was once upon a time left in the chair by accident, at the conclusion of business, and was obliged to sit in the House by himself for three hours, till some Member could be knocked up, and brought back again, to move the adjournment, and a great many other anecdotes of a similar description.

There he stands, leaning on his stick; looking at the throng of Exquisites around him with most profound contempt; and conjuring up, before his mind's eye, the scene she beheld in the old House in days gone by, when his own feelings were fresher and brighter, and when, as he imagines, wit, talent, and patriotism, flourished more brightly too.

You are curious to know who that young man in the rough great coat is, who has accosted every Member who has entered the House since we have been standing here. He is not a Member; he is only an "hereditary bondsman," or in other words, an Irish correspondent of an Irish newspaper, who has just procured his forty-second frank from a member whom he never saw in his life before. There he goes again—another! Bless the man, he has got his hat and pockets full, already.

We'll try our fortune at the Strangers' Gallery, though the nature of the debate encourages very little hope of success. What on earth are you about? Holding up your order as if it were a talisman at whose command the wicket would fly open? Nonsense. Just preserve the order for an autograph, if it's worth keeping at all, and make your appearance at the door with your thumb and fore-finger expressively inserted in your waistcoat-pocket. This tall stout man in black is the door-keeper. "Any room?" "Not an inch—two or three dozen gentlemen waiting down stairs on the chance of somebody's going."

out." Pull out your purse—"Are you *quite* sure there's no room?"—"I'll go and look," replies the door-keeper, with a wistful glance at your purse, "but I'm afraid there's not." He returns, and with real feeling assures you that it's morally impossible to get near the gallery. It's no use waiting. When you are refused admission into the Strangers' gallery at the House of Commons, under such circumstances, you may return home thoroughly satisfied that the place must be remarkably full indeed.*

Retracing our steps through the long passage, descending the stairs, and crossing Palace-yard, we halt, at a small temporary door-way adjoining the King's entrance to the House of Lords. We will endeavour to smuggle you into the Reporters' gallery, from whence you may peep into the House for one instant, but not longer, for its against orders our being there at all. Take care of the stairs, they are none of the best; through this little wicket—there. As soon as your eyes become a little used to the mist of the place, and the glare of the chandeliers below you, you will see that some unimportant personage on the Ministerial side of the House (to your right hand) is speaking amidst a hum of voices and confusion which would rival Babel, but for the circumstance of its being all in one language.

The "hear, hear," which occasioned that laugh, proceeded from our warlike friend in the mustachios; he is sitting on the back seat against the wall, behind the Member who is speaking, looking as ferocious and intellectual as usual. Take one look around you, and retire; the body of the House and the side galle-

* This paper was written before the practice of exhibiting Members of Parliament, like other curiosities, for the small charge of half-a-crown, was abolished. •

ries are full of members, some with their legs on the back of the opposite seat; some with theirs stretched out to their utmost length on the floor; some going out, others coming in; all of them talking, laughing, lounging; coughing, o-ing, questioning; or groaning; presenting a conglomeration of noise and confusion, to be met with in no other place in existence, not even excepting Smithfield on a market day, or a cock-pit in its glory.

But let us not omit to notice Bellamy's kitchen, or in other words, the refreshment room, common to both houses of Parliament, where Ministerialists and Oppositionists, Whigs and Tories, Radicals, Peers, and Destructives, strangers from the gallery, and the more favoured strangers from below the bar, are alike at liberty to resort; where divers honourable members prove their perfect independence by remaining during the whole of a heavy debate, solacing themselves with the creature comforts; and from whence they are summoned by whippers-in, when the House is on the point of dividing; either to give their "conscientious votes" on questions of which they are conscientiously innocent of knowing any thing whatever, or to find a vent for the playful exuberance of their wine-inspired fancies, in boisterous shouts of "Divide;" occasionally varied with a little howling, barking and crowing, or other ebullitions of senatorial pleasantry.

When you have ascended the narrow stair-case which in the present temporary House of Commons leads to the place we are describing, you will probably observe a couple of rooms on your right hand, with tables spread for dining. Neither of these is the kitchen, although they are both devoted to the same purpose; the kitchen is farther on to our left, up these half-dozen stairs. Before we ascend the staircase, however, we

must request you to pause in front of this little bar-place with the sash-windows; and beg your particular attention to the steady, honest-looking old fellow in black, who is its sole occupant. Nicholas (we do not mind mentioning the old fellow's name, for if Nicholas isn't a public man, who is?—and public men's names are property.) Nicholas is the butler of Bellamy's and has held the same place, dressed exactly in the same manner, and said precisely the same things, ever since the oldest of its present visitors can remember. An excellent servant Nicholas is—an unrivalled compounder of salad-dressing—an admirable preparer of soda-water and lemon—a special mixer of cold grog and punch, and, above all, an unequalled judge of cheese. If the old man have such a thing as vanity in his composition, this is certainly his pride; and if it be possible to imagine that any thing in this world could disturb his impenetrable calmness, we should say it would be doubting his judgment on this important point.

We needn't tell you all this, however, for if you have an atom of observation, one glance at his sleek knowing-looking head and face—his prim, white neckerchief, with the wooden tie into which it has been regularly folded for twenty years past, merging by imperceptible degrees into a small-plaited shirt-frill; and his comfortable-looking form encased in a well-brushed suit of black—would give you a better idea of his real character than a column of our poor description could convey.

Nicholas is rather out of his element now; he can't see the kitchen as he used to do in the old House; there, one window of his glass-case used to open into the room, and many a time have we amused ourself in drawing the cautious old man out, by asking deferential questions about Sheridan, and Percival, and

Castlereagh, and Heaven knows who beside, which he would answer with manifest delight, always inserting a "Mister" before every name.

Nicholas, like all men of his age and standing, has a great idea of the degeneracy of the times. He seldom expresses any political opinions, but we managed to ascertain, just before the passing of the Reform Bill, that Nicholas was a thorough Reformer. What was our astonishment to discover shortly after the meeting of the first reformed Parliament, that he was a most inveterate and decided Tory! 'Twas very odd: some men change their opinions from necessity, others from expediency, others from inspiration; but that Nicholas should undergo any change in any respect, was an event we had never contemplated, and should have considered impossible. His strong opinion against the clause which empowered the metropolitan districts to return Members to Parliament, too, was perfectly unaccountable.

We discovered the secret at last; the metropolitan Members always dined at home. The Rascals! As for giving additional Members to Ireland, it was even worse—decidedly unconstitutional. Why, sir, an Irish Member would go up there, and eat more dinner than three English Members put together. He took no wine; drank table-beer by the half-gallon; and went home to Manchester-buildings, or Milbank-street, for his whisky and water, and what was the consequence? Why the concern lost—actually lost—by their patronage.

A queer old fellow is Nicholas, and as completely a part of the building as the house itself. We wonder he ever left the old place, and fully expected to see in the papers, the morning after the fire, a pathetic account of an old gentleman in black, of decent appearance, who was seen at one of the upper windows

when the flames were at their height, and declared his resolute intention of falling with the floor. He must have been got out by force. However, he was got out—here he is again, looking as he always does, as if he had been in a band-box ever since last session. There he is, at his old post every night, just as we have described him: and as characters are scarce, and faithful servants scarcer, long may he be there say we.

Now, when you have taken your seat in the kitchen, and duly noticed the large fire and roasting jack at one end of the room—the little table for washing glasses and draining jugs at the other—the clock over the window opposite St. Margaret's Church—the deal tables and wax candles—the damask table-cloths and bare floor—the plate and china on the tables, and the gridiron on the fire; and a few other anomalies peculiar to the place—we will point out to your notice two or three of the people present, whose station or absurdities render them the most worthy of remark.

It is half-past twelve o'clock, and as the division is not expected for an hour or two, a few Members are lounging away the time here, in preference to standing at the bar of the House, or sleeping in one of the side galleries. That singularly awkward and ungainly looking man, in the brownish-white hat, with the straggling black trousers, which reach about half-way down the leg of his boots, who is leaning against the meat screen, apparently deluding himself into the belief that he is thinking about something, is a splendid sample of a Member of the House of Commons concentrating in his own person the wisdom of a constituency. Observe the wig of a dark hue but indistinguishable colour, for if it be naturally brown it has acquired a black tint by long service; and if it be naturally black, the same cause has imparted to it a tinge of rusty brown; and remark how very materially the

great, blinker-like spectacles assist the expression of that most intelligent face. Seriously speaking, did you ever see a countenance so expressive of the most hopeless extreme of heavy dulness, or behold a form so strangely put together? He is no great speaker: but when he *does* address the House the effect is absolutely irresistible.

The small gentleman with the sharp nose, who has just saluted him, is a Member of Parliament, an ex-Alderman, and a sort of amateur fireman. He, and the celebrated fireman's dog, were observed to be remarkably active at the conflagration of the two Houses of Parliament—they both ran up and down, and in and out, getting under people's feet, and into every body's way, fully impressed with the belief, that they were doing a great deal of good, and barking tremendously. The dog went quietly back to his kennel with the engine, but the other gentleman kept up such an incessant noise for some weeks after the occurrence, that he became a positive nuisance. As no more parliamentary fires have occurred, however, and he has consequently had no more opportunities of writing to the newspapers to relate how by way of preserving pictures he cut them out of their frames, and performed other great national services, he has gradually relapsed into his old state of calmness and obscurity.

That female in black—not the one whom the Lord's-Day-Bill-Baronet, has just chucked under the chin; the shorter of the two—is “Jane:” the Hebe of Belamy's. Jane is as great a character as Nicholas in her way. Her leading features are a thorough contempt for the great majority of her visitors; her predominant quality, love of admiration, as you cannot fail to observe, if you mark the glee with which she listens to something the young Member near her mutters somewhat unintelligibly in her ear (for his speech is rather

thick from some cause or other,) and how playfully she digs the handle of a fork into the arm with which he detains her, by way of reply.

Jane is no bad hand at repartees, and showers them about, with a degree of liberality and total absence of reserve or constraint, which occasionally excites no small amazement in the minds of strangers. She cuts jokes with Nicholas, too, but evidently looks up to him with a great deal of respect; and the immoveable solidity with which Nicholas receives the aforesaid jokes, and looks on, at certain pastoral friskings and rompings (Jane's only recreations) which occasionally take place in the passage, is not the least amusing part of his character.

The two persons who are seated at the table in the corner, at the farther end of the room, have been constant guests here, for many years past; and one of them has feasted within these walls, many a time, with the most brilliant characters of a brilliant period. He has gone up to the other House since then; the greater part of his boon companions have shared Yorick's fate, and his visits to Bellamy's are comparatively few.

If he really be eating his supper now, at what hour can he possibly have dined! A second solid mass of rumpsteak has disappeared, and he eat the first, in four minutes and three-quarters, by the clock over the window. Was there ever such a perfect personification of Falstaff? Mark the air with which he gloats over that Stilton as he removes the napkin which has been placed beneath his chin to catch the superfluous gravy of the steak, and with what gusto he imbibes the porter which has been fetched expressly for him in the pewter pot. Listen to the hoarse sound of that voice, kept down as it is, by layers of solids, and deep draughts of rich wine, and tell us if you ever saw such a perfect picture of a regular *gourmand*; and

whether he is not exactly the man whom you would pitch upon, as having been the partner of Sheridan's parliamentary carouses, the volunteer driver of the hackney coach that took him home, and the involuntary upsetter of the whole party?

What an amusing contrast between his voice and appearance, and that of the spare, squeaking old man, who sits at the same table, and who, elevating a little cracked bantam sort of voice to its highest pitch, invokes damnation upon his own eyes or somebody else's at the commencement of every sentence he utters. "The Captain," as they call him, is a very old frequenter of Bellamy's; much addicted to stopping "after the House is up" (an inexpressible crime in Jane's eyes,) and a complete walking reservoir of spirits and water.

The old Peer—or rather, the old man—for his peerage is of comparatively recent date—has a huge tumbler of hot punch brought him; and the other, damns and drinks, and drinks and damns—and smokes. Members arrive every moment in a great bustle to report that "The Chancellor of the Exchequer's up," and to get glasses of brandy and water to sustain them during the division; people who have ordered supper, countermand it, and prepare to go down stairs, when suddenly a bell is heard to ring with tremendous violence, and a cry of "Di-vi-sion" is heard in the passage. This is enough; away rush the members pell-mell. The room is cleared in an instant; the noise rapidly dies away; you hear the creaking of the last boot on the last stair, and we are left alone with the Leviathan of rump-steaks.

MR. MINNS AND HIS COUSIN.

MR. AUGUSTUS MINNS was a bachelor, of about forty as he said—of about eight-and-forty as his friends said. He was always exceedingly clean, precise, and tidy: perhaps somewhat priggish, and the most retiring man in the world. He usually wore a brown frock coat without a wrinkle, light inexplicables without a spot, a neat neckerchief with a remarkably neat tie, and boots without a fault: moreover, he always carried a brown silk umbrella with an ivory handle. He was a clerk in Somerset-house, or, as he said himself, he held “a responsible situation under Government.” He had a good and increasing salary, in addition to some 10,000*l.* of his own (invested in the funds, and he occupied a first floor in Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, where he had resided for twenty years, having been in the habit of quarrelling with his landlord the whole time, regularly giving notice of his intention to quit on the first day of every quarter, and as regularly countermanding it on the second.

There were two classes of created objects which he held in the deepest and most unmingled horror: they were, dogs and children. He was not unamiable, but he could at any time have viewed the execution of a dog, or the assassination of an infant, with the liveliest satisfaction. Their habits were at variance with his love of order; and his love of order, was as powerful as his love of life. Mr. Augustus Minns had no relations, in or near London, with the exception of his cousin Mr. Octavius Budden, to whose son, whom he had never seen (for he disliked the father) he had consented to become god-father by proxy. Mr. Budden having realized a moderate fortune by exercising the trade or calling of a corn-chandler, and having a great predilection for the country, had purchased a cottage in the vicinity of Stamford-hill, whither he retired with the wife of his bosom, and his only son, Master Alexander Augustus Budden. One evening, as Mr. and Mrs. B. were admiring their son, discussing his various merits, talking over his education, and disputing whether the classics should be made an essential part thereof, the lady pressed so strongly upon her husband the propriety of cultivating the friendship of Mr. Minns in behalf of their son, that Mr. Budden at last made up his mind, that it should not be his fault if he and his cousin were not in future more intimate.

"I'll break the ice, my love," said Mr. Budden, stirring up the sugar at the bottom of his glass of brandy-and-water, and casting a sidelong look at his spouse to see the effect of the announcement of his determination, "by asking Minns down to dine with us, on Sunday."

"Then, pray, Mr. Budden, write to your cousin at once," replied Mrs. Budden: "who knows, if we could only get him down here, but that he might take a fancy to our Alexander, and leave him his property?—Alick, my dear, take your legs off the rail of the chair!"

"Very true," said Mr. Budden, musing, "very true, indeed, my love!"

On the following morning, as Mr. Minns was sitting at his breakfast-table, alternately biting his dry toast, and casting a look upon the columns of his morning paper, which he always read from the title to the printer's name, he heard a loud knock at the street-door, which was shortly afterwards followed by the entrance of his servant, who put into his hand a particularly small card, on which was engraved in immense letters, "Mr. Octavius Budden, Amelia Cottage (Mrs. B's. name was Amelia,) Poplar-walk, Stamford-hill."

"Budden," ejaculated Minns, "what the deuce can bring that vulgar fellow here!—say I'm asleep—say I'm out, and shall never be home again—any thing to keep him down stairs."

"But, please, sir, the gentleman's coming up," replied the servant: and the fact was made perfectly evident, by an appalling creaking of boots on the staircase, accompanied by a pattering noise, the cause of which Minns could not, for the life of him, divine.

"Hem!—show the gentleman in," said the unfortunate bachelor.—Exit servant, and enter Octavius, preceded by a large white dog, dressed in a suit of fleecy-hosiery, with pink eyes, large ears, and no perceptible tail.

The cause of the pattering on the stairs was but too plain. Mr. Augustus Minns staggered beneath the shock of the dog's appearance.

"My dear fellow, how are you?" said Budden as he entered.

He always spoke at the top of his voice, and always said the same thing half-a-dozen times.

"How are you, my hearty?"

"How do you do, Mr. Budden?—pray take a chair!" politely stammered the discomfited Minns.

"Thank you—thank you—well—how are you, eh?"

"Uncommonly well, thank ye," said Minns, casting a diabolical look at the dog, who, with his hind legs on the floor, and his fore paws resting on the table, was dragging a bit of bread and butter out of a plate, preparatory to devouring it, with the buttered side next the carpet.

"Ah, you rogue!" said Budden to his dog; "you see Minns he's like me, always at home, eh, my boy?—I'm precious hot and hungry! I've walked all the way from Stamford-hill this morning."

"Have you breakfasted?" inquired Minns.

"Oh, no!—came to breakfast with you; so ring the bell, my dear fellow, will you? and let's have another cup and saucer, and the cold ham.—Make myself at home, you see!" continued Budden, dusting his boots with a table napkin. "Ha!—ha!—ha!—'pon my life, I'm hungry."

Minns rang the bell, and tried to smile.

"I decidedly never was so hot in my life," continued Octavius, wiping his forehead; "well, but how are you, Minns? 'Pon my soul, you wear capital-ly!"

"D'ye think so?" said Minns; and he tried another smile.

"'Pon my life, I do!"

"Mrs. B. and—what's his name—quite well?"

"Alick—my son, you mean, never better—never better. But at such a place as we've got at Poplar-walk, you know, he couldn't be ill if he tried. When I first saw it, it looked so knowing, with the front garden, and green railings, and the brass knocker, and all that—I really thought it was a cut above me."

"Don't you think you'd like the ham better," interrupted Minns, "if you cut it the other way?" He saw, with feelings which it is impossible to describe, that his visiter was cutting, or rather maiming, the ham, in utter violation of all established rules.

"No, thank ye," returned Budden, with the most barbarous indifference to crime, "I prefer it this way—it eats short. But, I say Minns, when will you come down and see us? You will be delighted with the place; I know you will. Amelia and I were talk-about you the other night, and Amelia said—another lump of sugar, please; thank ye—she said, don't you think you could contrive, my dear, to say to Mr. Minns, in a friendly way—come down, sir—d—n the dog! he's spoiling your curtains, Minns—ha! ha! ha!" Minns leaped from his seat as though he had received the discharge from a galvanic battery.

"Come out, sir!—go out, hoo!" cried poor Augustus, keeping, nevertheless, at a very respectful distance from the dog, having read of a case of hydrophobia in the paper of that morning. By dint of great exertion, much shouting, and a marvellous deal of poking under the tables with a stick and umbrella, the dog was at last dislodged, and placed on the landing,

outside the door, where he immediately commenced a most appalling howling; at the same time vehemently scratching the paint off the two nicely-varnished bottom pannels of the door, until they resembled the interior of a back-gammon-board.

"A good dog for the country that?" coolly observed Budden to the distracted Minns—"he's not much used to confinement, though. But now, Minns, when will you come down? I'll take no denial, positively. Let's see, to day's Thursday.—Will you come on Sunday? We dine at five, don't say no—do."

After a great deal of pressing, Mr. Augustus Minns, driven to despair, accepted the invitation, and promised to be at Poplar Walk on the ensuing Sunday, at a quarter before five, to the minute.

"Now mind the direction," said Budden; "the coach goes from the Flower-pot, in Bishopsgate-street, every half hour. When the coach stops at the Swan, you'll see, immediately opposite you, a white house."

"Which is your house—I understand," said Minns, wishing to cut short the visit, and the story at the same time.

"No, no, that's not mine; that's Grogus's, the great ironmonger's. I was going to say, you turn down by the side of the white-house till you can't go another step farther—mind that; and then you turn to your right, by some stables—well; close to you, you'll see a wall with 'Beware of the Dog,' written upon it, in large letters—(Minns shuddered)—go along by the side of that wall for about a quarter of a mile, and any body will show you which is my place."

"Very well—thank ye—good bye."

"Be punctual."

"Certainly: good morning."

"I say, Minns, youv'e got a card?"

"Yes, I have: thank ye." And Mr. Octavius Budden departed, leaving his cousin-looking forward to his visit of the following Sunday, with the feelings of the penniless poet to the weekly visit of his Scotch landlady.

Sunday arrived; the sky was bright and clear: crowds of people were hurrying along the streets intent on their different schemes of pleasure for the day; and every thing and every body looked cheerful and happy, but Mr. Augustus Minns.

The day was fine, but the heat was considerable; and, by the time Mr. Minns had fagged up the shady side of Fleet-street, Cheapside, and Threadneedle-street, he had become pretty warm, tolerably dusty, and it was getting late into the bargain. By the most extraordinary good fortune, however, a coach was waiting at the Flower-pot, into which Mr. Augustus Minns got, on the solemn assurance of the cad that the coach would start in three minutes—that being the very utmost extremity of time the coach was allowed to wait, by Act of Parliament? A quarter of an hour elapsed, and there were no signs of moving. Minns looked at his watch for the sixth time.

"Coachman, are you going or not?" bawled Mr. Minns, with his head and half his body out of the coach-window.

"Di—rectly, sir," said the coachman, with his hands in his pockets, looking as much unlike a man in a hurry as possible.

"Bill, take them cloths off." Five minutes more elapsed; at the end of which time the coachman mounted the box, from whence he looked down the

street, and up the street, and hailed all the pedestrians for another five minutes.

"Coachman! if you don't go this moment, I shall get out," said Mr. Minns, rendered desperate by the lateness of the hour, and the impossibility of being in Poplar-walk, at the appointed time.

"Going this minute, sir," was the reply;—and, accordingly the machine trundled on for a couple of hundred yards, and then, stopped again. Minns doubled himself up into a corner of the coach, and abandoned himself to fate—as a child, a mother, a handbox, and a parasol became his fellow passengers.

The child was an affectionate and an amiable infant; the little dear mistook Minns for its other parent, and screamed to embrace him.

"Be quiet, dear," said the Mamma, restraining the impetuosity of the darling, whose little fat legs were kicking, and stamping, and twining themselves into the most complicated forms, in an ecstasy of impatience. "Be quiet, dear, that's not your Papa."

"Thank heaven I am not"—thought Minns, as the first gleam of pleasure he had experienced that morning, shone like a meteor through his wretchedness.

Playfulness was agreeably mingled with affection in the disposition of the boy. When satisfied that Mr. Minns was not his parent, he endeavoured to attract his notice by scraping his drab trousers with his dirty shoes, poking his chest with his Mamma's parasol, and other nameless endearments, peculiar to infancy, with which he beguiled the tediousness of the ride, apparently very much to his own satisfaction.

When the unfortunate gentleman arrived at the Swan, he found to his great dismay that it was a quarter past five. The white-house, the stables, the "Be-

ware of the dog,"—every landmark was passed, with a rapidity not unusual to a gentleman of a certain age when too late for dinner. After the lapse of a few minutes, Mr. Minns found himself opposite a yellow brick house, with a green door, brass knocker, and door-plate, green window frames, and ditto railings, with "a garden" in front, that is to say, a small loose bit of gravelled ground, with one round and two scalene triangular beds, containing a fir tree, twenty or thirty bulbs, and an unlimited number of marigolds. The taste of Mr. and Mrs. Budden was farther displayed by the appearance of a cupid on each side of the door, perched upon a heap of large chalk flints, variegated with pink cone-shells. His knock at the door, was answered by a stumpy boy, in drab-livery, cotton stockings and high-lows, who, after hanging his hat on one of the dozen brass-pegs which ornamented the passage, denominated by courtesy "The Hall," ushered him into a front drawing-room, commanding a very extensive view of the backs of the neighbouring houses. The usual ceremony of introduction, and so forth, over, Mr. Minns took his seat, not a little agitated at feeling that he was the last comer, and, somehow or other, the lion of a dozen people, sitting together in a small drawing-room, getting rid of that most tedious of all time, the time preceding dinner.

"Well, Brogson," said Budden, addressing an elderly gentleman, in a black coat, drab knee breeches, and long gaiters, who, under pretence of inspecting the prints in an Annual, had been engaged in satisfying himself upon the subject of Minns' general appearance, by looking at him over the top of the leaves—"well, Brogson, what do Ministers mean to do? Will they go out, or what?"

"Oh—why—really, you know, I'm the last person in the world to ask for news. Your cousin, from his situation, is the most likely person to answer the question."

"Mr. Minns assured the last speaker, that although he was in Somerset-house, he possessed no official communication relative to the projects of his Majesty's Ministers. His remark was evidently received incredulously; and no farther conjectures being hazarded on the subject, a long pause ensued, during which the company occupied themselves in coughing and blowing their noses, until the entrance of Mrs. Budden caused a general rise.

The ceremony of introduction being over, dinner was announced, and down stairs the party proceeded accordingly, Mr. Minns escorting Mrs. Budden as far as the drawing-room door, but being prevented, by the narrowness of the stair-case, from extending his gallantry any farther. The dinner passed off, as such dinners usually do. Ever and anon amidst the clatter of knives and forks, and the hum of conversation, Mr. B's. voice might be heard, asking a friend to take wine, and assuring him he was glad to see him; and a good deal of by-play took place between Mrs. B. and the servants, respecting the removal of the dishes, during which her countenance assumed all the variations of a weather-glass, from "stormy," to "set fair."

Upon the dessert and wine being placed on the table, the servant, in compliance with a significant look from Mrs. B. brought down "Master Alexander," habited in a sky-blue suit with silver buttons, and with hair of nearly the same colour as the metal. After sundry praises from his mother, and various admoni-

tions as to his behaviour from his Pa, he was introduced to his god-father.

"Well, my little fellow—you are a fine boy, an't you?" said Minns, as happy as a tom-tit on bird-lime.

"Yes."

"How old are you?"

"Eight, next We'nsday. How old are *you*?"

"Alexander," interrupted his mother, "how dare you ask Mr. Minns how old he is?"

"He asked me how old *I* was," said the precocious darling, to whom Minns had, from that moment, internally resolved he never would bequeath one shilling. As soon as the titter occasioned by the observation, had subsided, a little smirking man with red whiskers, sitting at the bottom of the table, who, during the whole of dinner, had been endeavouring to obtain a listener to some stories about Sheridan, called out, with a very patronizing air—"Alick, what part of speech is *be*?"

"A verb."

"That's a good boy," said Mrs. Budden with all a mother's pride. "Now, you know what a verb is?"

"A verb is a word which signifies to be, to do, or to suffer; as, I am—I rule—I am ruled. Give me an apple, Ma."

"I'll give you an apple," replied the man with the red whiskers, who was an established friend of the family, or in other words was always invited by Mrs. Budden, whether Mr. Budden liked it or not; "if you'll tell me what is the meaning of *be*."

"Be?" said the prodigy, after a little hesitation—"an insect that gathers honey."

"No, dear," frowned Mrs. Budden.—"B double E is the substantive."

"I don't think he knows much yet about *common substantives*," said the smirking gentleman, who thought this an admirable opportunity for letting off a joke. "It's clear he's not very well acquainted with *proper names*. He! he! he!"

"Gentlemen," called out Mr. Budden, from the end of the table, in a stentorian voice, and with a very important air, "will you have the goodness to charge your glasses? I have a toast to propose."

"Hear! hear!" cried the gentlemen, passing the decanters. After they had made the round of the table, Mr. Budden proceeded—"Gentlemen; there is an individual present—"

"Hear! hear!" said the little man with red whiskers.

"*Pray* be quiet, Jones!" remonstrated Budden.

"I say, gentlemen, there is an individual present," resumed the host, "in whose society, I am sure we must take great delight—and—and—the conversation of that individual must have afforded to every one present, the utmost pleasure." ["Thank heaven he does not mean me!" thought Minns, conscious that his diffidence and exclusiveness had prevented his saying above a dozen words since he entered the house.] "Gentlemen, I am but an humble individual myself, and I perhaps ought to apologize for allowing any individual feelings of friendship and affection for the person I allude to, to induce me to venture to rise, to propose the health of that person—a person that, I am sure—that is to say, a person whose virtues, must endear him to those who know him—and those who have not the pleasure of knowing him, cannot dislike him."

"Hear! hear!" said the company, in a tone of encouragement and approval.

"Gentlemen," continued Budden, "my cousin is a man who—is a relation of my own. (Hear! hear!) Minns groaned audibly. "Who I am most happy to see here, and who, if he were not here, would certainly have deprived us of the great pleasure we all feel in seeing him. (Loud cries of hear!) Gentlemen, I feel that I have already trespassed on your attention for too long a time. With every feeling——of——with every sentiment of——of——"

"Gratification"—suggested the friend of the family.

"——Of gratification, I beg to propose the health of Mr. Minns."

"Standing, gentlemen!" shouted the indefatigable little man with the whiskers—"and with the honours. Take your time from me, if you please. Hip! hip! hip!—Za—Hip! hip! hip!—Za!—Hip! hip!—Za—a—a!"

All eyes were now fixed on the subject of the toast, who by gulping down port wine at the imminent hazard of suffocation, endeavoured to conceal his confusion. After as long a pause as decency would admit, he rose, but as the newspapers say in their reports, "we regret that we are quite unable to give even the substance of the honourable gentleman's observations." The words "present company—honour—present occasion," and "great happiness"—heard occasionally, and repeated at intervals, with a countenance expressive of the utmost confusion and misery, convinced the company that he was making an excellent speech; and, accordingly, on his resuming his seat, they cried "Bravo!" and manifested tumultuous applause. Jones, who had been long watching his opportunity, then darted up.

"Budden," said he, "will you allow *me* to propose a toast?"

"Certainly," replied Budden, adding in an under tone to Minns right across the table—"Devilish sharp fellow that: you'll be very much pleased with his speech. He talks equally well on any subject." Minns bowed, and Mr. Jones proceeded:

"It has on several occasions, in various instances, under many circumstances, and in different companies, fallen to my lot to propose a toast to those by whom at the time, I have had the honour to be surrounded. I have sometimes, I will cheerfully own—for why should I deny it?—felt the overwhelming nature of the task I have undertaken, and my own utter incapability to do justice to the subject. If such have been my feelings, however, on former occasions, what must they be now—now under the extraordinary circumstances in which I am placed. (Hear! hear!)—To describe my feelings accurately would be impossible; but I cannot give you a better idea of them, gentlemen, than by referring to a circumstance which happens, oddly enough, to occur to my mind at the moment. On one occasion, when that truly great and illustrious man, Sheridan, was——"

Now there is no knowing what new villany in the form of a joke would have been heaped upon the memory of that very ill-used man Mr. Sheridan, if the boy in drab had not at that moment entered the room in a breathless state, to report that, as it was a very wet night, the nine o'clock stage had come round to know whether there was any body going to town, as in that case, he (the nine o'clock) had room for one inside.

Mr. Minns started up; and despite countless exclamations of surprise, and entreaties to stay, persisted in his determination to accept the vacant place. But the brown silk umbrella was no where to be found, and as the coachman couldn't wait, he drove back

to the Swan, leaving word for Mr. Minns to "run round" and catch him. But as it did not occur to Mr. Minns for some ten minutes or so, that he had left the brown silk umbrella with the ivory handle, in the other coach, coming down; and moreover as he was by no means remarkable for speed, it is no matter of surprise that when he accomplished the feat of "running round" to the Swan, the coach—the last coach—had gone without him.

It was somewhere about three o'clock in the morning, when Mr. Augustus Minns knocked feebly at the street door of his lodgings in Tavistock-street, cold, wet, cross, and miserable. He made his will the next morning, and his professional man informs us, in that strict confidence in which we inform the public, that neither the name of Mr. Octavius Budden, nor of Mrs. Amelia Budden, nor of Master Alexander Augustus Budden, appears therein.

THE LAST CAB DRIVER.

AND THE

FIRST OMNIBUS CAB.

OF all the cabriolet drivers whom we ever had the honour and gratification of knowing by sight—and our acquaintance in this way has been most extensive—there is one who has made an impression on our mind which can never be effaced, and who awakened in our bosom a feeling of admiration and respect, which we entertain a fatal presentiment will never be called forth again, by any human being. He was a man of most simple and prepossessing appearance. He was a brown whiskered, white hatted, no-coated cabman; his nose was generally red, and his bright blue eye not unfrequently stood out in bold relief, against a black border of artificial workmanship; his boots were of the Wellington form, pulled up to meet his corduroy

knee smalls, or at least to approach as near them as their dimensions would admit of; and his neck was usually garnished with a bright yellow handkerchief. In summer he carried in his mouth a flower; in winter, a straw; slight, but to a contemplative mind, certain, indications of a love of nature, and a taste for botany. His cabriolet was gorgeously painted—a bright red; and wherever we went, City or West End, Paddington or Holloway, North, East, West, or South, there was the red cab, bumping up against the posts at the street corners, and turning in and out, among hackney coaches, and drays, and carts, and wagons, and omnibuses, and contriving by some strange means or other, to get out of places which no other vehicle but the red cab could ever by any possibility contrive to get into, at all. Our fondness for that red cab was unbounded. How we should have liked to see it in the circle at Astley's! Our life upon it, that it should have performed such evolutions as would have put the whole company to shame—Indian chiefs, knight, Swiss peasants, and all.

Some people object to the exertion, of getting into cabs, and others object to the difficulty of getting out of them; we think both these are objections which take their rise in perverse and ill-conditioned minds. The getting into a cab is a very pretty and graceful process, which, when well performed, is essentially melo-dramatic. First, there's the expressive pantomime of every one of the eighteen cabmen on the stand, the moment you raise your eyes from the ground. Then there's your own pantomime in reply—quite a little ballet. Four cabs immediately leave the stand, for your especial accommodation; and the evolutions of the animals who draw them, are beautiful in the extreme, as they grate the wheels of the cabs against the curb-stones, and sport playfully in the kennel.

You single out a particular cab, and dart swiftly towards it. One bound, and you are on the first step; turn your body lightly round to the right, and you are on the second; bend gracefully beneath the reins, working round to the left at the same time, and you are in the cab. There is no difficulty in finding a seat: the apron knocks you comfortably into it at once, and off you go.

The getting out of a cab, is, perhaps, rather more complicated in its theory, and a shade more difficult in its execution. We have studied the subject a good deal, and we think the best way is, to throw yourself out, and trust to chance for your alighting on your feet. If you make the driver alight first, and then throw yourself upon him, you will find that he breaks your fall materially. In the event of your contemplating an offer of eightpence, on no account make the tender, or show the money, until you are safely on the pavement. It's very bad policy attempting to save the fourpence. You are very much in the power of a cabman, and he considers it a kind of fee, not to do you any wilful damage. Any instruction, however, in the art of getting out of a cab, is wholly unnecessary if you are going any distance, because the probability is, that you will be shot lightly out, before you have completed the third mile. We are not aware of any instance on record in which a cab-horse has performed three consecutive miles without going down once. What of that? It's all excitement. In these days of derangement of the nervous system, and universal lassitude, people are content to pay handsomely for excitement; and where can it be procured at a cheaper rate?

But, to return to the red cab; it was omnipresent. You had only to walk down Holborn, or Fleet-street, or any of the principal thoroughfares in which there is

a great deal of traffic, and judge for yourself. You had hardly turned into the street, when you saw a trunk or two, lying on the ground: an uprooted post, a hat-box, a portmanteau, and a carpet-bag, strewed about in a very picturesque manner: a horse, in a cab, standing by, looking about him with great unconcern; and a crowd, shouting and screaming with delight, cooling their flushed faces against the glass windows of a chemist's shop. "What's the matter here, can you tell me?"—"O'ny a cab, sir." "Any body hurt, do you know?"—"O'ny the fare, sir. I see him a turnin' the corner, and I ses to another gen'lm'n, 'that's a reg'lar little oss that, and he's a comin' along rayther sweet, an't he!' 'He just is,' ses the other gen'lm'n, ven bump they cums agin the post, and out flys the fare like bricks." Need we say it was the red cab; or that the gentleman with the straw in his mouth, who emerged so coolly from the chemist's shop, and philosophically climbing into the little dickey, started off at full gallop, was the red cab's licensed driver?

The ubiquity of this red cab, and the influence it exercised over the risible muscles of justice itself, was perfectly astonishing. You walked into the justice-room of the Mansion-house; the whole court resounded with merriment. The Lord Mayor threw himself back in his chair, in a state of frantic delight at his own joke, every vein in Mr. Hobler's countenance was swollen with laughter, partly at the Lord Mayor's facetiousness, but more at his own, the constables and police-officers were (as in duty bound) in ecstasies at Mr. Hobler and the Lord Mayor combined; and the very paupers, glancing respectfully at the beadle's countenance, tried to smile, as even he relaxed. A tall, weazen-faced man, with an impediment in his speech, would be endeavouring to state a

case of imposition against the red-cab's driver; and the red-cab's driver, and the Lord Mayor, and Mr. Hobler, would be having a little fun among themselves, to the inordinate delight of every body but the complainant. In the end, justice would be so tickled with the red-cab driver's native humour, that the fine would be mitigated, and he would go away full gallop, in the red cab, to impose on somebody else without loss of time.

The driver of the red cab, confident in the strength of his own moral principles, like many other philosophers, was wont to set the feelings and opinions of society at complete defiance. Generally speaking, perhaps, he would as soon carry a fare safely to his destination, as he would upset him—sooner, perhaps, because in that case he not only got the money, but had the additional amusement of running a longer heat against some smart rival. But society made war upon him in the shape of penalties, and he must make war upon society in his own way. This was the reasoning of the red-cab driver. So, he bestowed a searching look upon the fare, as he put his hand in his waistcoat pocket, when he had gone half the mile, to get the money ready; and if he brought forth eightpence, out he went.

The last time we saw our friend, was one wet evening in Tottenham-court-road, when he was engaged in a very warm, and somewhat personal altercation with the loquacious little gentleman in a brown coat. Poor fellow, there were great excuses to be made for him: he had not received above eighteen pence more than his fare, and consequently laboured under a great deal of very natural indignation. The dispute had attained a pretty considerable height, when at last the loquacious little gentleman, making a mental calculation of the distance, and finding that he had already

paid more than he ought, avowed his unalterable determination to "pull up" the cabman in the morning.

"Now, just mark this, young man," said the little gentleman, "I'll pull you up to-morrow morning."

"No; will you though?" said our friend with a sneer.

"I will," replied the little gentleman, "mark my words, that's all. If I live till to-morrow morning, you shall repent this."

There was a steadiness of purpose, and indignation of speech, about the little gentleman, as he took an angry pinch of snuff, after this last declaration, which made a visible impression on the mind of the red-cab-driver. He appeared to hesitate for an instant. It was only for an instant, for his resolve was soon taken.

"You'll pull me up, will you?" said our friend.

"I will," rejoined the little gentleman, with even greater vehemence than before.

"Very well," said our friend, tucking up his shirt sleeves very calmly. "There'll be three weeks for that. Wery good; that'll bring me up to the middle o' next month. Three weeks more would carry me on to my birth-day, and then I've got ten pound to draw. I may as vel get board, lodgin', and washin', till then, out of the county, as pay for it myself; consequently here goes!"

So, without more ado, the red-cab driver knocked the little gentleman down, and then called the police to take himself into custody, with all the civility in the world.

A story is nothing without the sequel; and therefore, we may state, that to our certain knowledge, the board, lodging, and washing were all provided in due course. We happen to know the fact, for it came to

our knowledge thus. We went over the House of Correction for the County of Middlesex shortly after, to witness the operation of the silent system; and looked on all the "wheels" with the greatest anxiety, in search of our long-lost friend. He was no where to be seen, however, and we began to think that the little gentleman in the brown coat, must have relented, when as we were traversing the kitchen-garden, which lies in a sequestered part of the prison, we were startled by hearing a voice which apparently proceeded from the wall, pouring forth its soul in the plaintive air of "all around my hat," which was then just beginning to form a recognised portion of our national music.

We started.—"What voice is that?" said we.

The Governor shook his head.

"Sad fellow," he replied, "very sad." He positively refused to work on the wheel, so after many trials, I was compelled to order him into solitary confinement. He says he likes it very much though, and I am afraid he does, for he lies on his back on the floor, and sings comic songs all day!"

Shall we add, that our heart had not deceived us; and that the comic singer was no other than our eagerly-sought friend, the red-cab-driver?

We have never seen him since, but we have strong reason to suspect that this noble individual was a distant relation of a water-man of our acquaintance, who, on one occasion, when we were passing the coach-stand over which he presides, after standing very quietly to see a tall man struggle into a cab, ran up very briskly when it was all over, (as his brethren invariably do,) and touching his hat, asked, as a matter of course, for "a copper for the waterman." Now the fare was by no means a handsome man; and waxing very indignant at the demand, he replied—"Mo-

ney! What for? Coming up and looking at me, I suppose."—"Vell, sir," rejoined the waterman, with a smile of immoveably complacency. "*That's* worth twopence, at least."

This identical waterman afterwards attained a very prominent station in society; and as we know something of his life, and have often thought of telling what we *do* know, perhaps we shall never have a better opportunity than the present.

Mr. William Barker, then, for that was the gentleman's name. Mr. William Barker was born — but why need we relate where Mr. William Barker was born, or when? Why scrutinize the entries in parochial ledgers, or seek to penetrate the Lucinian mysteries of Lying-in-hospitals? Mr. William Barker *was* born, or he had never been. There is a son—there was a father. There is an effect—there was a cause. Surely this is sufficient information, for the most Fatima-like curiosity; and, if it be not, we regret our inability to supply any farther evidence on the point. Can there be a more satisfactory, or more strictly parliamentary course? Impossible.

We at once avow a similar inability to record at what precise period, or by what particular process, this gentleman's patronymic, of William Barker, became corrupted into "Bill Boorker." Mr. Barker acquired a high standing, and no inconsiderable reputation among the members of that profession to which he more particularly devoted his energies; and to them he was generally known, either by the familiar appellation of "Bill Boorker," or the flattering designation of "Aggrawatin Bill," the latter being a playful and expressive *soubriquet*, illustrative of Mr. Barker's great talent in "aggrawatin" and rendering wild, such subjects of his Majesty as are conveyed from place to place, through the instrumentality of

omnibusses. Of the early life of Mr. Barker, little is known, and even that little is involved in considerable doubt and obscurity. A want of application, a restlessness of purpose, a thirsting after porter, a love of all that is roving and cadger-like in nature, shared in common with many other great geniuses, appear to have been his leading characteristics. The busy hum of a parochial free-school, and the shady repose of a county gaol, were alike inefficacious in producing the slightest alteration in Mr. Barker's disposition—his feverish attachment to change and variety nothing could repress; his native daring, no punishment could subdue.

If Mr. Barker can be fairly said to have had any weakness in his earlier years, it was an amiable one—love; love in its most comprehensive form—a love of ladies, liquors, and pocket-handkerchiefs. It was no selfish feeling; it was not confined to his own possessions, which but too many men regard with exclusive complacency. No; it was a nobler love—a general principle. It extended itself with equal force, to the property of other people.

There is something very affecting in this. It is still more affecting, to know, that such philanthropy is but imperfectly rewarded. Bow-street, Newgate, and Millbank, are a poor return for general benevolence, evincing itself in an irrepressible love of created objects. Mr. Barker felt it so—after a lengthened interview with the highest legal authorities, he quitted his ungrateful country, with the consent, and at the expense of its Government; proceeded to a distant shore, and there employed himself, like another Cincinnatus, in clearing and cultivating the soil—a peaceful pursuit, in which a term of seven years glided almost imperceptibly away.

Whether, at the expiration of the period we have

just mentioned, the British Government required Mr. Barker's presence here, or did not require his residence abroad, we have no distinct means of ascertaining. We should be inclined, however, to favour the latter position, inasmuch as we do not find that he was advanced to any other public post on his return, than the post at the corner of the Haymarket, where he officiated as assistant-waterman to the hackney-coach-stand. Seated, in this capacity, on a couple of tubs near the curb-stone, with a brass-plate and number suspended round his neck by a massive chain, and his ankles curiously enveloped in haybands, he is supposed to have made those observations on human nature, which exercised so material an influence over all his proceedings in later life.

Mr. Barker had not officiated for many months in this capacity, when the appearance of the first omnibus caused the public mind to go in a new direction, and prevented a great many hackney-coaches from going in any direction at all. The genius of Mr. Barker at once perceived the whole extent of the injury that would be eventually inflicted on cab and coach-stands, and, by consequence, on water-men also, by the progress of the system, of which the first omnibus was a part. He saw, too, the necessity of adopting the pursuits of some more profitable profession; and his active mind at once perceived how much might be done in the way of enticing the youthful and unwary, and shoving the old and helpless, into the wrong buss, and carrying them off, until, reduced to despair, they ransomed themselves by the payment of six-pence a-head, or to adopt his own figurative expression in all its native beauty, "till they was regularly done over, and forked out the stumpy."

An opportunity for realizing his fondest anticipations, soon presented itself. Rumours were rife on the

hackney-coach-stands, that a buss was building, to run from Lisson-grove to the bank, down Oxford-street and Holborn, and the rapid increase of busses on the Paddington-road, encouraged the idea. Mr. Barker secretly and cautiously inquired in the proper quarters. The report was correct; the "Royal William" was to make its first journey on the following Monday. It was a crack affair altogether. An enterprising young cabman, of established reputation as a dashing whip—for he had compromised with the parents of three scrunched children, and just "worked out" his fine, for knocking down an old lady—was the driver; and the spirited proprietor, knowing Mr. Barker's qualifications, appointed him to the vacant office of cad, on the very first application. The buss began to run, and Mr. Barker entered into a new suit of clothes, and on a new sphere of action.

To recapitulate all the improvements introduced by this extraordinary man, into the omnibus system—gradually, indeed, but surely—would occupy a far greater space than we are enabled to devote to this imperfect memoir. To him is universally assigned the original suggestion of the practice which afterwards became so general—of the driver of a second buss keeping constantly behind the first one, and driving the pole of his vehicle either into the door of the other, every time it was opened, or through the body of any lady or gentleman who might make an attempt to get into it—a humorous and pleasant invention, exhibiting all that originality of idea, and fine flow of spirits, so conspicuous in every action of this great man.

Mr. Barker had opponents of course; what man in public life has not? But even his worst enemies cannot deny that he has taken more old ladies and gentlemen to Paddington who wanted to go to the Bank,

and more old Ladies and gentlemen to the Bank who wanted to go to Paddington, than any six men on the road; and however much malevolent spirits may pretend to doubt the accuracy of the statement, they well know it to be an established fact, that he has forcibly conveyed a variety of ancient persons of either sex, to both places, who had not the slightest or most distant intention of going any where at all.

Mr. Barker was the identical cad who nobly distinguished himself, some time since, by keeping a tradesman on the step—the omnibus going at full speed all the time—till he had thrashed him to his entire satisfaction, and finally throwing him away, when he had quite done with him. Mr. Barker it *ought* to have been, who, honestly indignant at being ignominiously ejected from a house of public entertainment, kicked the landlord in the knee, and thereby caused his death. We say it *ought* to have been Mr. Barker, because the action was not a common one, and could have emanated from no ordinary mind.

It has now become matter of history; it is recorded in the Newgate Calendar; and we wish we could attribute this piece of daring heroism to Mr. Barker. We regret being compelled to state that it was not performed by him. Would, for the family credit that we could add, it was achieved by his brother!

It was in the exercise of the nicer details of his profession, that Mr. Barker's knowledge of human nature was beautifully displayed. He could tell at a glance where a passenger wanted to go to, and would shout the name of the place accordingly, without the slightest reference to the real destination of the buss. He knew exactly the sort of old lady that would be too much flurried by the process of pushing in, and pulling out of the caravan, to discover where she had been set down until too late; had an intuitive percep-

tion of what was passing in a passenger's mind when he inwardly resolved to "pull that cad up to-morrow morning;" and never failed to make himself agreeable to female servants, whom he would place next the door, and talk to all the way.

Human judgment is never infallible, and it would occasionally happen that Mr. Barker experimentalised with the timidity or forbearance of the wrong person, in which case a summons to a Police-office, was, on more than one occasion, followed by a committal to prison. It was not in the power of trifles such as these, however, to subdue the freedom of his spirit. As soon as they passed away, he resumed the duties of his profession with unabated ardour.

We have spoken of Mr. Barker and of the red-cab driver, in the past tense; alas! Mr. Barker has again become an absentee; and the class of men to which they both belonged, are fast disappearing. Improvement has peered beneath the aprons of our cabs, and penetrated to the very innermost recesses of our omnibuses. Dirt and fustian will vanish before cleanliness and livery. Slang will be forgotten when civility becomes general; and that enlightened, eloquent, sage, and profound body, the Magistracy of London, will be deprived of half their amusement, and half their occupation.

THE PARLOUR ORATOR.

WE had been lounging the other evening, down Oxford-street, Holborn, Cheapside, Coleman-street, Finsbury-square, and so on, with the intention of returning by Pentonville and the New Road, when we began to feel rather thirsty, and disposed to rest for five or ten minutes. So, we turned back towards an old, quiet, decent, public-house, which we remembered to have passed but a moment before (it was not far from the City-road) for the purpose of solacing ourselves with a glass of ale. The house was none of your stuccoed, French-polished, illuminated palaces, but a modest public house of the old school, with a little old bar, and a little old landlord, who, with a wife and daughter of the same pattern, was comfortably seated in the bar aforesaid—a snug little room with a cheerful fire, protected by a large screen, from behind which the young lady emerged, on our representing our inclination for a glass of ale.

“Won’t you walk into the parlour, sir?” said the young lady, in seductive tones.

“You had better walk into the parlour, sir,” said the little old landlord, throwing his chair back, and

looking round one side of the screen, to survey our appearance.

"You had much better step into the parlour, sir," said the little old lady, popping out her head, on the other side of the screen.

We cast a slight glance around, as if to express our ignorance of the locality so much recommended. The little old landlord observed it; bustle out of the small door of the small bar; and forthwith ushered us into the parlour itself.

It was an ancient, dark-looking room, with oaken wainscoting, a sanded floor, and a high mantel-piece. The walls were ornamented with three or four old, coloured prints in black frames, each one representing a naval engagement, with a couple of men-of-war, banging away at each other most vigorously, while another vessel or two were blowing up in the distance: and the fore-ground presented an interesting collection of broken masts and blue legs sticking up out of water. Depending from the ceiling, in the centre of the room, were a gas-light and bell-pull; and on each side were three or four long narrow tables, behind which was a thickly-planted row of those slippy, shiny-looking wooden chairs, peculiar to places of this description. The monotonous appearance of the sanded boards was relieved by an occasional spittoon; and a triangular pile of those useful articles adorned the two upper corners of the apartment.

At the farthest table, nearest the fire, with his face towards the door at the bottom of the room, sat a stoutish man of about forty, whose short, stiff, black hair, curled closely round a broad high forehead, and a face to which something besides water and exercise had communicated a rather inflamed appearance. He was smoking a cigar, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, and had that confident oracular air which marks a

as the leading politician, general authority, and universal anecdote-relater, of the place. He had evidently just delivered himself of something very weighty; for the remainder of the company were puffing at their respective pipes and cigars, in a kind of solemn abstraction, as if quite overwhelmed with the magnitude of the subject recently under discussion.

On his right hand sat an elderly gentleman with a white head, and broad-brimmed brown hat; and on his left, a sharp-nosed light-haired man in a brown sur-tout reaching nearly to his heels, who took a whiff at his pipe, and an admiring glance at the red-faced man, alternately.

"Very extraordinary!" said the light-haired man after a pause of five minutes. A murmur of assent ran through the company.

"Not at all extraordinary—not at all," said the red-faced man, awakening suddenly from his reverie, and turning upon the light-haired man, the moment he had spoken.

"Why should it be extraordinary?—Why is it extraordinary? prove it to be extraordinary?"

"Oh, if you come to that," said the light-haired man.

"Come to that!" (ejaculated the man with the red face) "but we must come to that. We stand, in these times, upon a calm elevation of intellectual attainment, and not in the dark, recess of mental deprivation. Proof is what I require—proof, and not assertions, in these stirring times. Every Gen'lem'n that knows me, knows what was the nature and effect of my observations, when it was in the contemplation of the Old Street Suburban Representative Discovery Society, to recommend a candidate for that place in Cornwall there—I forget the name of it. Mr. Snobee (said Mr. Wilson) is a fit and proper person to repre-

sent the borough in Parliament. "Prove it," says I. "He is a friend to Reform," says Mr. Wilson. "Prove it," says I. "The abolitionist of the national debt, the unflinching opponent of pensions, the uncompromising advocate of the negro, the reducer of sinecures and the duration of Parliaments; the extender of nothing but the suffrages of the people," says Mr. Wilson. "Prove it," says I. "His acts prove it," says he; "Prove them," says I.

"And he could not prove them," said the red-faced man, looking round triumphantly; "and the borough didn't have him; and if you carried this principle to the full extent, you'd have no debt, no pensions, no sinecures, no negroes, no nothing. And then standing upon an elevation of intellectual attainment, and having reached the summit of popular prosperity, you might bid defiance to the nations of the earth, and erect yourselves in the proud confidences of wisdom and superiority. This is my argument—this always has been my argument—and if I was a Member of the House of Commons to-morrow, I'd make 'em shake in their shoes with it." And the red-faced man hit the table very hard with his clenched fist, by way of adding weight to the declaration; and then smoked away like a brewery.

"Well!" said the sharp-nosed man, in a very slow and soft voice, addressing the company in general, "I always do say, that of all the gentlemen I have the pleasure of meeting in this room, there is not one whose conversation I like to hear, so much as Mr. Rogers's, or who is such improving company."

"Improving company!" said Mr. Rogers, for that was the name of the red-faced man—"You may well say I'm improving company, for I've improved you all to some purpose, though as to my conversation being as my friend Mr. Ellis here, describes it, that is

not for me to say any thing about. You, gentlemen, are the best judges on that point; but this I will say, when I came into this parish, and first used this room, ten years ago, I don't believe there was one man in it, who knew he was a slave, and now you all know it, and writhe under it; inscribe that upon my tomb, and I am satisfied."

"Why as to inscribing it on your tomb," said a little, green-grocer with a rather chubby face, "of course you can have any thing chalked up, as you like to pay for, so far as it relates to yourself, and your affairs, but when you come to talk about slaves, and that there gammon, you'd better keep it in the family, 'cos I for one don't like to be called them names night after night."

"You *are* a slave," said the red-faced man, "and the most pitiable of all slaves."

"Wery hard if I am," interrupted the green-grocer, "for I got no good out of the twenty millions that was paid for mancipation, any how."

"A willing slave," ejaculated the red-faced man, getting more red with eloquence, and contradiction, "resigning the dearest birth-right of your children—neglecting the sacred call of Liberty—who standing imploringly before you, appeals to the warmest feelings of your heart, and points to your helpless infants, but in vain."

"Prove it," said the green-grocer.

"Prove it!" sneered the man with the red-face. "What! bending beneath the yoke of an insolent and factious oligarchy; bowed down by the domination of cruel laws; groaning beneath tyranny and oppression, on every hand, at every side, and in every corner. Prove it!—" The red-faced man abruptly broke off, sneered melo-dramatically, and buried his countenance and his indignation together, in a pint pot.

"Ah, to be sure, Mr. Rogers," said a stout broker in a large waistcoat, who had kept his eyes fixed on this luminary all the time he was speaking. "Ah, to be sure," said the broker with a sigh, "that's the point."

"Of course, of course," said divers members of the company, who understood almost as much about the matter as the broker himself.

"You had better let him alone, Tommy," said the broker, by way of advice to the little green-grocer, "he can tell what's o'clock by an eight-day, without looking at the minute hand, he can. Try it on, on some other suit; it won't do with him, Tommy."

"What is a man?" continued the red-faced specimen of the species, jerking his hat indignantly, from its peg on the wall. "What is an Englishman? Is he to be trampled upon, by every oppressor? Is he to be knocked down, at every body's bidding? What's freedom? Not a standing army. What's a standing army? Not freedom. What's general happiness? Not universal misery. Liberty ain't the window-tax, is it? The Lords ain't the people, are they?" and the red-faced man, gradually bursting into a radiating sentence, in which such adjectives as "dastardly," "oppressive," "violent," and "sanguinary," formed the most conspicuous words, knocked his hat indignantly over his eyes, left the room, and slammed the door after him.

"Wonderful man!" said he of the sharp nose.

"Splendid speaker!" added the broker.

"Great power!" said every body but the green-grocer. And as they said it, the whole party shook their heads mysteriously, and one by one retired, leaving us alone in the old parlour.

If we had followed the established precedent in all such instances, we should have fallen into a fit of

musings, without delay; the ancient appearance of the room—the old panelling of the wall—the chimney blackened with smoke and age—would have carried us back a hundred years at least, and we should have gone dreaming on, until the pewter-pot on the table, or the little beer-chiller on the fire, had started into life, and addressed to us a long story of days gone by. But by some means or other, we were not in a romantic humour; and although we tried very hard, to invest the furniture with vitality, it remained perfectly unmoved, obstinate, and sullen. Being thus reduced to the unpleasant necessity of musing about ordinary matters, our thoughts reverted to the red-faced man, and his oratorical display. A numerous race are those red-faced men; there is not a parlour, or club-room, or benefit society, or humble party of any kind, without its red-faced man. Weak-pated dolts they are, and a great deal of mischief they do. So, just to hold a pattern one, up to know the others by, we took his likeness at once, and put him in here. And that's the reason why we have written this paper.

THE FIRST OF MAY.

"Now ladies, up in the sky-parlour: only once a year, if you please."

YOUNG LADY WITH BRASS LADLE.

"Sweep—sweep—sw-e-c-p."

ILLEGAL WATCHWORD.

THE first of May! There is a merry freshness in the sound, calling to our minds a thousand thoughts of all that is pleasant and beautiful in nature, in her sweetest and most delightful form. What man is there, over whose mind a bright spring morning does not exercise a magic influence—carrying him back to the days of his childish sports, and conjuring up before him the old green field, with its gently-waving trees, where the birds sang as he has never heard them since—where the butterfly fluttered far more gaily than he ever sees him now, in all his ramblings—where the sky seemed bluer, and the sun shone more brightly—where the air blew more freshly over greener grass, and sweeter-smelling flowers—where every thing wore a richer and more brilliant hue than it is ever dressed in now! Such are the deep feelings of childhood, and such are the impressions which every lovely object stamps upon its heart. The hardy traveller wanders through the maze of thick and pathless woods, where the sun's rays never shone, and heaven's pure air never played: he stands on the brink of the roaring waterfall, and, giddy and bewildered, watches the foaming mass as it leaps from stone to stone, and

from crag to crag; he lingers in the fertile plains of a land of perpetual sunshine, and revels in the luxury of their balmy breath. But what are the deep forests, or the thundering waters, or the richest landscapes that bounteous nature ever spread, to charm the eyes, and captivate the senses of man, compared with the recollection of the old scenes of his early youth?—Magic scenes indeed; for the fairy thoughts of infancy, dressed them in colours brighter than the rainbow, and almost as fleeting: colours which are the reflection only of the sparkling sunbeams of childhood, and can never be called into existence, in the dark and cloudy days of after-life!

In former times, spring brought with it not only such associations as these, connected with the past, but sports and games for the present—merry dances round rustic pillars, adorned with emblems of the season, and reared in honour of its coming. Where are they now! Pillars we have, but they are no longer rustic ones; and as to dancers, they are used to rooms, and lights, and would not show well in the open air. Think of the immorality, too! What would your sabbath enthusiasts say, to an aristocratic ring encircling the Duke of York's column in Carlton-terrace—a grand *poussette* of the middle classes, round Alderman Waithman's monument in Fleet-street—or a general hands-four-round of ten-pound householders, at the foot of the Obelisk in St. George's fields? Alas! romance can make no head against the riot act; and pastoral simplicity is not understood by the police.

Well, many years ago, we began to get a steady and matter-of-fact sort of people; and dancing in spring, being beneath our dignity, we gave it up, and in course of time it descended to the sweeps—a fall certainly, because, though sweeps are very good fellows in their way, and moreover very useful in a civilized

community, they are not exactly the sort of people to give the tone to the little elegancies of society. The sweeps, however, got the dancing to themselves, and they kept it up, and handed it down. This was a severe blow to the romance of spring-time, but it did not entirely destroy it either; for a portion of it descended to the sweeps with the dancing, and rendered them objects of great interest. A mystery hung over the sweeps in those days. Legends were in existence of wealthy gentlemen who had lost children, and who, after many years of sorrow and suffering, had found them in the character of sweeps. Stories were related of a young gentleman who, having been stolen from his parents in his infancy, and devoted to the occupation of chimney-sweeping, was sent, in the course of his professional career, to sweep the chimney of his mamma's bed-room; and how, being hot and tired when he came out of the chimney, he got into the bed, he had so often slept in as an infant, and was discovered and recognised therein by his mother, who once every year of her life, thereafter, requested the pleasure of the company of every London sweep, at half-past one o'clock, to roast beef, plum-pudding, porter, and sixpence.

Such stories as these, and there were many such, threw an air of mystery round the sweeps, and produced for them some of those good effects, which animals derive from the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. No one, except the masters, thought of ill-treating a sweep, because no one knew who he might be, or what nobleman's or gentleman's son he might turn out. Chimney-sweeping was, by many believers in the marvellous, considered as a sort of probationary term, at an earlier or later period of which, divers young noblemen were to come into possession of their

rank and titles: and the profession was held by them in great respect, accordingly.

We remember, in our young days, a little sweep about our own age, with curly hair and white teeth, whom we devoutly and sincerely believed to be the lost son and heir of some illustrious personage—an impression which was resolved into an unchangeable conviction on our infant mind, by the subject of our speculations informing us, one day, in reply to our question, propounded a few moments before his ascent to the summit of the kitchen chimney, “that he believed he’d been born in the varkis, but he’d never know’d his father.” We felt certain, from that time forth, that he would one day be owned by a lord, at least; and we never heard the church-bells ring, or saw a flag hoisted in the neighbourhood, without thinking that the happy event had at last occurred, and that his long-lost parent had arrived in a coach and six, to take him home to Grosvenor-square. He never came, however; and, at the present moment, the young gentleman in question is settled down as a master sweep in the neighbourhood of Battle Bridge, his distinguishing characteristics being a decided antipathy to washing himself, and the possession of a pair of legs very inadequate to the support of his somewhat unwieldy and corpulent body.

Now, the romance of spring having gone out before our time, we were fain to console ourselves as we best could, with the uncertainty that enveloped the birth and parentage of its attendant dancers, the sweeps; and we *did* console ourselves with it, for many years. But even this wretched source of comfort received a shock, from which it has never recovered—a shock, which was, in reality, its death-blow. We could not disguise from ourselves, the fact, that whole families of sweeps were regularly born of sweeps, in the rural districts of Somers’ Town and

Camden Town—that the eldest son succeeded to the father's business, that the other branches assisted him therein, and commenced on their own account; that their children again, were educated to the profession; and that about their identity, there could be no mistake whatever. We could not be blind, we say, to this melancholy truth, but we could not bring ourselves to admit it nevertheless, and we lived on for some years in a state of voluntary ignorance. We were roused from our pleasant slumber, by certain dark insinuations thrown out, by a friend of ours, to the effect that children in the lower ranks of life were beginning to *choose* chimney-sweeping as their particular walk; that applications had been made by various boys to the constituted authorities, to allow them to pursue the object of their ambition, with the full concurrence and sanction of the law; that the affair, in short, was becoming one of mere legal contract. We turned a deaf ear to these rumours, at first, but slowly and surely they stole upon us. Month after month, week after week, nay, day after day, at last, did we meet with accounts of similar applications. The veil was removed, all mystery was at an end, and chimney-sweeping had become a favourite and chosen pursuit. There is no longer any occasion to steal boys; for boys flock in crowds to bind themselves. The romance of the trade has fled, and the chimney-sweeper of the present day, is no more like unto him of thirty years ago, than is a Fleet-street pickpocket to a Spanish brigand, or Paul Pry to Caleb Williams.

This gradual decay and disuse of the practice of leading noble youths into captivity, and compelling them to ascend chimneys, was a severe blow, if we may so speak, to the romance of chimney-sweeping, and to the romance of spring at the same time; but even this was not all; for some few years ago, the dancing on May-day began to decline; small sweeps

were observed to congregate in twos or threes, unsupported by a "green," with no "My Lord" to act as masters of the ceremonies, and no "My Lady" to preside over the exchequer. Even in companies where there was a green, it was an absolute nothing—a mere sprout; and the instrumental accompaniments rarely extended beyond the shovels and a set of Pan-pipes, better known to the many, as a "mouth-organ."

These were signs of the times, portentous omens of a coming change; and what was the result which they shadowed forth? Why, the master sweeps, influenced by a restless spirit of innovation, actually interposed their authority, in opposition to the dancing, and substituted a dinner—an anniversary dinner at White Conduit House—where clean faces appeared in lieu of black ones, smeared with rose pink; and knee cords and tops, superseded nankeen drawers and rosetted shoes.

Gentlemen who were in the habit of riding shy horses; and steady-going people, who have no vagrancy in their souls, lauded this alteration to the skies, and the conduct of the master sweeps was described as beyond the reach of praise. But how stands the real fact? Let any man deny, if he can, that when the cloth had been removed, fresh pots and pipes laid upon the table, and the customary loyal and patriotic toasts proposed, the celebrated Mr. Sluffen, of Adam and Eve Court, whose authority not the most malignant of our opponents can call in question, expressed himself in manner following: "That now he'd cotcht the cheerman's hi, he wished he might be jolly vell blessed, if he worn't a goin' to have his innins, vich he vould say these here obserwashuns—that how some mischeevus coves as know'd nuffin about the con-sarn, had tried to sit people agin the mas'r swips, and take the shine out o' their bis'ness,

and the bread out o' the traps o' their preshus kids, by a makin' o' this here remark, as chimblies could be as vell svept by cheenery as by boys; and that the makin' use o' boys for that there purpuss vos babareous, vereas, he'ad been a chummy—he begged the cheerman's parding for usin' such a vulgar hexpression—more nor thirty year, he might say he'd been born in a chimbley, and he know'd uncommon vell as 'cheenery vos vus nor o' no use:—and as to 'ker-hew-elty to the boys, every body in the chimbley line, know'd as vell as he did, that they liked the climb-in' better nor nuffin as vos." From this day, we date the total fall of the last lingering remnant of May-day dancing, among the élite of the profession: and from this period we commence a new era in that portion of our spring associations, which relates to the 1st of May.

We are aware that the unthinking part of the population will meet us here, with the assertion, that dancing on May-day still continues—that "greens" are annually seen to roll along the streets—that sportive youths in the garb of clowns, precede them, giving vent to the ebullitions of their sportive fancies; and that lords and ladies follow in their wake.

Granted. We are ready to acknowledge that in outward show, these processions have greatly improved: we do not deny the introduction of solos on the drum; we will even go so far as to admit an occasional fantasia on the triangle; but here our admissions end. We positively deny that the sweeps have art or part in these proceedings. We distinctly charge the dustmen with throwing what they ought to clear away, into the eyes of the public. We accuse scavengers, brick-makers, and gentlemen who devote their energies to the costermongering line, with obtaining money once a-year, under false pretences. We cling with peculiar fondness to the customs of days gone by, and have shut out conviction as long as

we could, but it has forced itself upon us; and we now proclaim to a deluded public, that the May-day dancers are *not* sweeps. The size of them, alone, is sufficient to repudiate the idea. It is a notorious fact, that the widely-spread taste for register-stoves has materially increased the demand for small boys; whereas the men, who, under a fictitious character, dance about the streets on the first of May now-a-days, would be a tight fit in a kitchen flue, to say nothing of the parlour. This is strong presumptive evidence, but we have positive proof—the evidence of our own senses. And here is our testimony.

Upon the morning of the second of the merry month of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-six, we went out for a stroll, with a kind of forlorn hope of seeing something or other which might induce us to believe that it was really spring, and not Christmas: and after wandering as far as Copenhagen House, without meeting any thing calculated to dispel our impression that there was a mistake in the almanacks, we turned back, down Maiden-lane, with the intention of passing through the extensive colony lying between it and Battle Bridge, which is inhabited by proprietors of donkey-carts, boilers of horse-flesh, and sifters of cinders; and through this colony we should have passed, without stoppage or interruption, if a little crowd gathered round a shed had not attracted our attention, and induced us to pause.

When we say a “shed,” we do not mean the conservatory sort of building, which, according to the old song, Love tenanted when he was a young man, but a wooden house with windows stuffed with rags and paper, and a small yard at the side, with one dust-cart, two baskets, a few shovels; and little heaps of cinders, and fragments of China and tiles, scattered about it. Before this inviting spot we paused; and the longer

we looked, the more we wondered what exciting circumstance it could be, that induced the foremost members of the crowd to flatten their noses against the parlour window, in the vain hope of catching a glimpse of what was going on inside. After staring vacantly about us, for some minutes, we appealed, touching the cause of this assemblage, to a gentleman in a suit of tarpaulin, who was smoking his pipe on our right hand; but as the only answer we obtained, was a playful inquiry whether our maternal parent had disposed of her mangle, we determined to await the issue in silence.

Judge of our virtuous indignation, when the street-door of the shed opened, and a party emerged therefrom, clad in the costume and emulating the appearance of May-day sweeps!

The first person who appeared was "my lord," habited in a blue coat and bright buttons, with gilt paper tacked over the seams, yellow knee-breeches, pink cotton stockings, and shoes; a cocked hat, ornamented with shreds of various-coloured paper, on his head, a *bouquet* about the size of a prize cauliflower in his button-hole, a long Belcher handkerchief in his right hand, and a thin cane in his left. A murmur of applause ran through the crowd (which was chiefly composed of his lordship's personal friends,) when this graceful figure made its appearance, which swelled forth into a burst of applause as his fair partner in the dance bounded forth to join him. Her ladyship was attired in pink crape over bed-furniture, with a low body and short sleeves. The symmetry of her ankles was partially concealed by a very perceptible pair of frilled trousers; and the inconvenience which might have resulted from the circumstance of her white satin shoes being a few sizes too large, was obviated by their being firmly attached to her legs with strong tape sandals.

Her head was ornamented with a profusion of artificial flowers; and in her hand she bore a large brass ladle, wherein to receive what she figuratively denominated "the tin." The other characters were a young gentleman in girl's clothes and a widow's cap: two clowns who walked upon their hands in the mud, to the immeasurable delight of all the spectators; a man with a drum; another man with a flageolet; a dirty woman in a large shawl, with a box under her arm for the money,—and last, though not least, the green, animated by no less a personage than our identical friend in the tarpaulin suit.

The man hammered away at the drum, the flageolet squeaked, the shovels rattled, the green rolled about, pitching first on one side and then on the other—my lady threw her right foot over her left ankle, and her left foot over her right ankle, alternately; and my lord ran a few paces forward, and butted at the green, and then a few paces backward upon the toes of the crowd, and then went to the right, and then to the left, and then dodged my lady round the green; and finally drew her arm through his, and called upon the boys to shout, which they did lustily—for this was the dancing.

We passed the same group accidentally in the evening. We never saw a green so drunk, a lord so quarrelsome (no: not even in the house of peers after dinner,) a pair of clowns so melancholy, a lady so muddy, or a party so miserable.

How has May-day decayed! How many merry sports, such as dancing round the Maypole, have fallen into desuetude! And, apparently trifling as their loss may appear, with how many profligate and vicious customs have they been replaced! How much of cheerfulness, and simplicity of character, have they carried away with them; and how much of degradation and discontent have they left behind!

THE DRUNKARD'S DEATH.

WE will be bold to say, that there is scarcely a man in the constant habit of walking, day after day, through any of the crowded thoroughfares of London, who cannot recollect among the people whom he "knows by sight," to use a familiar phrase, some being, of abject and wretched appearance, whom he remembers to have seen in a very different condition, whom he has observed sinking lower and lower by almost imperceptible degrees, and the shabbiness and utter destitution of whose appearance, at last, strike forcibly and painfully upon him, as he passes by. Is there any man who has mixed much with society, or whose avocations have caused him to mingle, at one time or other, with a great number of people, who cannot call to mind the time when some shabby, miserable wretch, in rags and filth, who shuffles past him now, in all the squalor of disease and poverty, was a respectable tradesman, or a clerk, or a man following some thriving pursuit, with good prospects, and decent means; or cannot any of our readers call to mind from among the list of their quondam acquaintance, some fallen and degraded man, who lingers about the pavement in

hungry misery: from whom every one turns coldly away, and who preserves himself from sheer starvation, nobody knows how? Alas! such cases are of too frequent occurrence to be rare items in any man's experience; and they arise from one cause—drunkenness, that fierce rage for the slow, sure poison, that oversteps every other consideration; that casts aside wife, children, friends, happiness, and station; and hurries its victims madly on, to degradation and death.

Some of these men have been impelled by misfortune and misery, to the vice that has degraded them. The ruin of worldly expectations, the death of those they loved, the sorrow that slowly consumes, but will not break the heart, has driven them wild; and they present the hideous spectacle of madmen, slowly dying by their own hands. But, by far the greater part, have wilfully, and with open eyes, plunged into the gulf from which the man who once enters it, never rises more, but into which he sinks deeper and deeper down, until recovery is hopeless.

Such a man as this, once stood by the bed-side of his dying wife, while his children knelt around, and mingled low bursts of grief with their innocent prayers. The room was scantily and meanly furnished; and it needed but a glance at the pale form from which the light of life was fast passing away, to know that grief, and want, and anxious care, had been busy at the heart for many a weary year. An elderly female with her face bathed in tears, was supporting the head of the dying woman—her daughter—on her arm. But it was not towards her, that the wan face turned; it was not her hand that the cold and trembling fingers clasped; they pressed the husband's arm; the eyes so soon to be closed in death, rested on his face; and the man shook beneath their gaze. His dress was slovenly and disordered, his face inflamed, his eyes blood-

shot and heavy. He had been summoned from some wild debauch to the bed of sorrow and death.

A shaded lamp by the bed-side, cast a dim light on the figures around, and left the remainder of the room in thick, deep shadow. The silence of night prevailed without the house, and the stilness of death was in the chamber. A watch hung over the mantel-shelf; its low ticking was the only sound that broke the profound quiet, but it was a solemn one; for well they knew, who heard it, that before it had recorded the passing of another hour, it would beat the knell of a departed spirit.

It is a dreadful thing to wait and watch for the approach of death; to know that hope is gone, and recovery impossible; and to sit and count the dreary hours through long, long, nights,—such nights as only watchers by the bed of sickness know. It chills the blood to hear the dearest secrets of the heart, the pent-up, hidden secrets of many years, poured forth by the unconscious helpless being before you; and to think how little the reserve, and cunning of a whole life will avail, when fever and delirium tear off the mask at last. Strange tales have been told in the wanderings of dying men; tales so full of guilt and crime, that those who stood by the sick person's couch have fled in horror and affright, lest they should be scared to madness by what they heard and saw; and many a wretch has died alone, raving of deeds, the very name of which, has driven the boldest man away.

But no such ravings were to be heard at the bed-side by which the children knelt. Their half-stifled sobs and moanings, alone broke the silence of the lonely chamber. And when at last the mother's grasp relaxed; and turning one look from the children to their father, she vainly strove to speak, and fell backward on the pillow, all was so calm and tranquil that

she seemed to sink to sleep. They leant over her; they called upon her name, softly at first, and then in the loud and piercing tones of desperation. But there was no reply. They listened for her breath, but no sound came. They felt for the palpitation of the heart, but no faint throb responded to the touch. That heart was broken, and she was dead.

The husband sunk into a chair by the bed-side, and clasped his hands upon his burning forehead. He gazed from child to child, but when a weeping eye met his, he quailed beneath its look. No word of comfort was whispered in his ear, no look of kindness lighted on his face. All shrunk from, and avoided him; and when at last, he staggered from the room, no one sought to follow, or console the widower.

The time had been, when many a friend would have crowded round him in his affliction, and many a heartfelt condolence would have met him in his grief. Where were they now? One by one, friends, relations, the commonest acquaintance even, had fallen off from, and deserted the drunkard. His wife alone, had clung to him in good and evil, in sickness and poverty; and how had he rewarded her? He had reeled from the tavern, to her bed-side, in time to see her die.

He rushed from the house, and walked swiftly through the streets. Remorse, fear, shame, all crowded on his mind. Stupified with drink, and bewildered with the scene he had just witnessed, he re-entered the tavern he had quitted shortly before. Glass succeeded glass. His blood mounted, and his brain whirled round. Death! Every one must die, and why not *she*? She was too good for him; her relations had often told him so. Curses on them! Had they not deserted her, and left her to whine away the time at home? Well; she was dead, and happy perhaps. It was better as it was. Another glass—one more!

Hurrah! It was a merry life while it lasted; and he would make the most of it.

Time went on; the three children who were left to him, grew up, and were children no longer; the father remained the same—poorer, shabbier, and more dissolute-looking, but the same confirmed and ir reclaimable drunkard. The boys had, long ago, run wild in the streets, and left him; the girl alone remained, but she worked hard; and words or blows could always procure him something for the tavern. So he went on in the old course, and a merry life he led.

One night, as early as ten o'clock—for the girl had been sick for many days, and there was, consequently, little to spend at the public-house—he bent his steps homewards, bethinking himself that if he would have her able to earn money, it would be as well to apply to the parish surgeon, or, at all events, to take the trouble of inquiring what ailed her, which he had not yet thought it worth while to do. It was a wet December night; the wind blew piercing cold, and the rain poured heavily down. He begged a few half-pence from a passer by, and having bought a small loaf—for it was his interest to keep the girl alive, if he could) he shuffled onwards, as fast as the wind and rain would let him. At the back of Fleet-street, and lying between it, and the water-side, are several mean and narrow courts, which form a portion of Whitefriars; and it was to one of these, that he directed his steps.

The alley into which he turned, might, for filth and misery, have competed with the darkest corner of this ancient sanctuary in its dirtiest and most lawless time. The houses, varying from two stories in height, to four, were stained with every indescribable hue, that long exposure to the weather, damp, and rottenness,

can impart to tenements composed originally of the roughest and coarsest materials. The windows were patched with paper, and stuffed with the foulest rags; the doors were falling from their hinges; poles with lines on which to dry clothes, projected from every casement, and sounds of quarrelling or drunkenness issued from every room.

The solitary oil lamp in the centre of the court had been blown out, either by the violence of the wind, or the act of some inhabitant who had excellent reasons for objecting to his residence being rendered too conspicuous; and the only light which fell upon the broken and uneven pavement, was derived from the miserable candles that here and there, twinkled in the rooms of such of the more fortunate residents, as could afford to indulge in so expensive a luxury. A gutter ran down the centre of the alley—all the sluggish odours of which, had been called forth by the rain; and as the wind whistled through the old houses, the doors and shutters creaked upon their hinges, and the windows shook in their frames, with a violence which every moment seemed to threaten the destruction of the whole place.

The man whom we have followed into this den, walked on, in the darkness, sometimes stumbling into the main gutter, and at others into some branch repositories of garbage which had been formed by the rain, until he reached the last house in the court. The door, or rather what was left of it, stood ajar, for the convenience of the numerous lodgers; and he proceeded to grope his way up the old and broken stair, to the attic story.

He was within a step or two, of his room door, when it opened, and a girl, whose miserable and emaciated appearance was only to be equalled by that of

the candle which she shaded with her hand, peeped anxiously out.

"Is that you, father?" said the girl.

"Who else should it be?" replied the man gruffly. "What are you trembling at? It's little enough, that I've had to drink to-day, for there's no drink without money, and no money without work. What the d—l's the matter with the girl?"

"I am not well, father—not at all well," said the girl, bursting into tears.

"Ah!" replied the man, in the tone of a person who is compelled to admit a very unpleasant fact, to which he would rather remain blind, if he could. "You must get better somehow, for we must have money. You must go to the parish doctor, and make him give you some medicine. They're paid for it, d—n 'em. What are you standing before the door, for? Let me come in, can't you?"

"Father," whispered the girl, shutting the door behind her, and placing herself before it, "William has come back."

"Who!" said the man, with a start.

"Hush," replied the girl, "William; brother William."

"And what does he want?" said the man, with an effort at composure—"money? meat? drink?" He's come to the wrong shop for that, if he does. Give me the candle—give me the candle, fool—I ain't going to hurt him." He snatched the candle from her hand, and walked into the room.

Sitting on an old box, with his head resting on his hand, and his eyes fixed on a wretched cinder fire that was smouldering on the hearth, was a young man of about two and twenty, miserably clad in an old coarse jacket and trousers. He started up when his father entered.

"Fasten the door, Mary," said the young man hastily—"Fasten the door. You look as if you didn't know me, father. It's long enough, since you drove me from home; you may well forget me."

"And what do you want here, now?" said the father, seating himself on a stool, on the other side of the fire-place. "What do you want here, now?"

"Shelter," replied the son, "I'm in trouble; that's enough. If I'm caught I shall swing; that's certain. Caught I shall be, unless I stop here; that's *as* certain. And there's an end of it."

"You mean to say, you've been robbing, or murdering, then?" said the father.

"Yes, I do," replied the son: "Does it surprise you, father?" He looked steadily in the man's face, but he withdrew his eyes, and bent them on the ground.

"Where's your brothers?" he said, after a long pause.

"Where they'll never trouble you," replied the son: "John's gone to America, and Henry's dead."

"Dead!" said the father, with a shudder, which even he could not repress.

"Dead," replied the young man. "He died in my arms—shot like a dog, by a gamekeeper. He staggered back, I caught him, and his blood trickled down my hands. It poured out from his side like water. He was weak, and it blinded him; but he threw himself down on his knees, on the grass, and prayed to God, that if his mother was in Heaven, He would hear her prayers for pardon for her youngest son. 'I was her favourite boy, Will,' he said, 'and I am glad to think, now, that when she was dying, though I was a very young child then, and my little heart was almost bursting, I knelt down at the foot of the bed, and thanked God for having made me so fond of her as to have never once done any thing to bring

the tears into her eyes; oh, Will, why was she taken away and father left!" There's his dying words, father," said the young man; "make the best you can of 'em. You struck him across the face, in a drunken fit, the morning we ran away; and here's the end of it."

The girl wept aloud; and the father, sinking his head upon his knees, rocked himself to and fro.

"If I am taken," said the young man, "I shall be carried back into the country, and hung for that man's murder. They cannot trace me here, without your assistance, father. For aught I know, you may give me up to justice, but unless you do, here I stop, until I can venture to escape abroad."

For two whole days, all three remained in the wretched room, without stirring out. On the third evening, however, the girl was worse than she had been yet, and the few scraps of food they had, were gone. It was indispensably necessary that somebody should go out; and as the girl was too weak and ill, the father went, just at night-fall.

He got some medicine for the girl, and a trifle in the way of pecuniary assistance. On his way back, he earned sixpence by holding a horse; and he turned homewards with enough money to supply their most pressing wants, for two or three days to come. He had to pass the public house. He lingered for an instant, walked past it, turned back again, lingered once more, and finally slunk in. Two men whom he had not observed, were on the watch. They were on the point of giving up their search in despair, when his loitering attracted their attention; and when he entered the public house, they followed him.

- "You'll drink with me, master," said one of them, proffering him a glass of liquor.

"And me too," said the other, replenishing the glass as soon as it was drained of its contents.

The man thought of his hungry children, and his son's danger. But they were nothing to the drunkard. He *did* drink; and his reason left him.

"A wet night, Warden," whispered one of the men in his ear, as he at length turned to go away, after spending in liquor one half of the money on which, perhaps, his daughter's life depended.

"The right sort of night, for our friends in hiding, Master Warden," whispered the other.

"Sit down here," said the one who had spoken first, drawing him into a corner. "We have been looking arter the young 'un. We came to tell him, it's all right now, but we couldn't find him 'cause we hadn't got the precise direction. But that ain't strange, for I don't think he know'd it himself, when he came to London, did he?"

"No, he didn't," replied the father.

The two men exchanged glances.

"There's a vessel down at the docks, to sail at midnight, when it's high water," resumed the first speaker, "and we'll put him on board. His passage is taken in another name, and what's better than that, it's paid for. It's lucky we met you."

"Very," said the second.

"Capital luck," said the first, with a wink to his companion.

"Great," replied the second, with a slight nod of intelligence.

"Another glass here; quick"—said the first speaker. And in five minutes more, the father had unconsciously yielded up his own son, into the hangman's hands.

Slowly and heavily, the time dragged along, as the brother and sister, in their miserable hiding-place,

listened in anxious suspense to the slightest sound. At length, a heavy footstep was heard upon the stair; it approached nearer; it reached the landing; and the father staggered into the room.

The girl saw that he was intoxicated, and advanced with the candle in her hand to meet him; she stopped short, gave a loud scream, and fell senseless on the ground. She had caught sight of the shadow of a man, reflected on the floor. They both rushed in, and in another instant the young man was a prisoner, and handcuffed.

"Very quietly done," said one of the men to his companion, "thanks to the old man. Lift up the girl, Tom—come, come, it's no use crying, young woman. It's all over now, and can't be helped."

The young man stooped for an instant over the girl, and then turned fiercely round upon his father, who had reeled against the wall, and was gazing on the group with drunken stupidity.

"Listen to me, father," he said, in a tone that made the drunkard's flesh creep. "My brother's blood, and mine, is on your head: I never had kind look, or word, or care, from you; and, alive or dead, I never will forgive you. Die when you will, or how, I will be with you. I speak as a dead man now, and I warn you, father, that as surely as you must one day stand before your Maker, so surely shall your children be there, hand in hand, to cry for judgment against you." He raised his manacled hands in a threatening attitude, fixed his eyes on his shrinking parent, and slowly left the room; and neither father nor sister ever beheld him, more, on this side the grave.

When the dim and misty light of a winter's morning penetrated into the narrow court, and struggled through the begrimed window of the wretched room,

Warden awoke from his heavy sleep, and found himself alone. He rose, and looked round him; the old flock mattress on the floor was undisturbed; every thing was just as he remembered to have seen it last; and there were no signs of any one, save himself, having occupied the room during the night. He inquired of the other lodgers, and of the neighbours; but his daughter had not been seen or heard of. He rambled through the streets, and scrutinized each wretched face among the crowds that thronged them, with anxious eyes. But his search was fruitless, and he returned to his garret when night came on, desolate and weary.

For many days he occupied himself in the same manner, but no trace of his daughter did he meet with, and no word of her, reached his ears. At length he gave up the pursuit as hopeless. He had long thought of the probability of her leaving him, and endeavouring to gain her bread in quiet, elsewhere. She had left him at last, to starve alone. He ground his teeth, and cursed her.

He begged his bread from door to door. Every halfpenny he could wring from the pity or credulity of those to whom he addressed himself, was spent in the old way. A year passed over his head; the roof of a jail was the only one that had sheltered him, for many months. He slept under archways, and in brick-fields—any where, where there was some warmth or shelter from the cold and rain. But in the last stage of poverty, disease, and houseless want, he was a drunkard still.

At last, one bitter night, he sunk down on a doorstep in Piccadilly, faint and ill. The premature decay of vice and profligacy, had worn him to the bone. His cheeks were hollow and livid; his eyes were sunk-

en, and their sight was dim. His legs trembled beneath his weight, and a cold shiver ran through every limb.

And now the long-forgotten scenes of a misspent life crowded thick and fast upon him. He thought of the time when he had had a home—a happy, cheerful home—and of those who peopled it, and flocked about him then, until the forms of his elder children seemed to rise from the grave, and stand about him—so plain, so clear, and so distinct they were, that he could touch and feel them. Looks that he had long forgotten, were fixed upon him once more; voices long since hushed in death, sounded in his ears like the music of village bells. But it was only for an instant. The rain beat heavily upon him; and cold and hunger were gnawing at his heart again.

He rose, and dragged his feeble limbs a few paces farther. The street was silent and empty; the few passengers who passed by, at that late hour, hurried quickly on, and his tremulous voice was lost in the violence of the storm. Again that heavy chill struck through his frame; and his blood seemed to stagnate beneath it. He coiled himself up in a projecting doorway, and tried to sleep.

But sleep had fled from his dull and glazed eyes. His mind wandered strangely, but he was awake, and conscious. The well-known shout of drunken mirth, sounded in his ear, the glass was at his lips, the board was covered with choice, rich food—they were before him: he could see them all, he had but to reach out his hand, and take them—and, though the illusion was reality itself, he knew that he was sitting alone in the deserted street, watching the rain-drops as they pattered on the stones; that death was coming upon him by inches; and that there were none to care for, or help him.

Suddenly, he started up, in the extremity of terror. He had heard his own voice shouting in the night air, he knew not what, or why. Hark! A groan! Another! His senses were leaving him: half-formed and incoherent words burst from his lips; and his hands sought to tear and lacerate his flesh. He was going mad, and he shrieked for help till his voice failed him.

He raised his head, and looked up the long dismal street. He recollected that outcasts like himself, condemned to wander day and night in those dreadful streets, had sometimes gone distracted with their own loneliness. He remembered to have heard, many years before, that a homeless wretch had once been found in a solitary corner, sharpening a rusty knife to plunge into his own heart, preferring death to that endless, weary, wandering to and fro. In an instant his resolve was taken, his limbs received new life: he ran quickly from the spot; and paused not for breath, until he reached the river-side.

He crept softly down the steep stone stairs that lead from the commencement of Waterloo Bridge, down to the water's level. He crouched into a corner, and held his breath, as the patrol passed. Never did prisoner's heart throb with the hope of liberty and life, half so eagerly, as did that of the wretched man at the prospect of death. The watch passed close to him, but he remained unobserved; and after waiting till the sound of footsteps had died away in the distance, he cautiously descended, and stood beneath the gloomy arch that forms the landing-place from the river.

The tide was in, and the water flowed at his feet. The rain had ceased, the wind was lulled, and all was, for the moment, still and quiet—so quiet that the slightest sound on the opposite bank, even the rippling of the water against the barges that were moored

there, was distinctly audible to his ear. The stream stole languidly and sluggishly on. Strange and fantastic forms rose to the surface, and beckoned him to approach; dark gleaming eyes peered from the water, and seemed to mock his hesitation, while hollow murmurs from behind, urged him onwards. He retreated a few paces, took a short run, a desperate leap, and plunged into the river.

Not five seconds had passed when he rose to the water's surface, but what a change had taken place in that short time, in all his thoughts and feelings! Life, life, in any form, poverty, misery, starvation, any thing but death. He fought and struggled with the water that closed over his head, and screamed in agonies of terror. The curse of his own son rang in his ears. The shore, but one foot of dry ground—he could almost touch the step. One hand's breadth nearer, and he was saved—but the tide bore him onward, under the dark arches of the bridge, and he sank to the bottom.

Again he rose, and struggled for life. For one instant—for one brief instant—the buildings on the river's banks, the lights on the bridge through which the current had borne him, the black water, and the fast flying clouds, were distinctly visible—once more he sunk, and once again he rose. Bright flames of fire, shot up from earth to heaven, and reeled before his eyes, while the water thundered in his ears, and stunned him with its furious roar.

A week afterwards the body was washed ashore, some miles down the river, a swollen and disfigured mass. Unrecognised and unpitied, it was borne to the grave; and there, it has, long since, mouldered away.

THE END.



